Domestic Girlfriend

2

KEI SASUGA

Domestic Girlfriend

2

DOME
GIRL

KEI SASUGA

DOME GIRL

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CHAPTER 6: AN ADULT'S WORLD

スッ SWIF
ビクッ TWITCH
SEE?
YOU'RE SCARED.
...!
I KNEW IT.
NO MATTER HOW BOLD YOU ACT...
...OR HOW COOL YOU TRY TO LOOK...

...YOUR EYES...
...ARE STILL THOSE OF A CHILD'S.

CLACK
カチャ・・・
TMP TMP
タタッ
SHUT
パタン…
ズル…
SLIDE

WHAT THE HELL ...
...AM I DOING?
ガ
CLACK
チャ…
ダ
THUD
ーッ

バタ TMP
バタ TMP
バタ TMP
W-
WE HAVE A PROBLEM!
WHAT'S WRONG? BREAKFAST IS READY.
I...
I JUST...
...WENT TO GO WAKE NATSUO UP AND...
...I FOUND THIS NOTE!
I'm sorry, I won't be coming home for a while. I'll be at a friend's place, so please don't worry about me. Natsuo
OH, MY...
DID HE RUN AWAY FROM HOME?
HIS SHOES WERE GONE WHEN I CHECKED THE FRONT DOOR.
BUT WHY...?
NATSUO-KUN... MAYBE HE WAS AGAINST OUR MARRIAGE, AFTER ALL.

DO YOU THINK HE FORCED HIMSELF TO GOING ALONG WITH IT?!
I'VE MADE HIM ENDURE SO MUCH UNTIL NOW...!
I'M A FAILURE AS A FATHER!
わぁあああっ
WAHHHH
...
HINA-NEE.

SIGN: CAFÉ & BAR / L'AMANT
茶&BAR
喫茶 & BAR
FUMI-KUN.
YOU CAN CLOCK OUT NOW IF YOU WANT.
YOU SHOULD PROBABLY GET HOME EARLY, RIGHT?
REALLY? SORRY...
SLIDE
I'M BAAACK.
WEL-COME HOME.
WOW.
YOU'RE IN THE EXACT SAME POSITION YOU WERE IN WHEN I LEFT.

I'M GUESSING YOU DIDN'T GO TO SCHOOL, THEN.
I'M THINKING OF TAKING SOME TIME OFF...
I SEE.
DID ANYONE TRY TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU?
...
JUST MY DAD...AND YUYA AND KAZU FROM SCHOOL TEXTED ME.
Now you're skipping school on a whim, huh, Natsuo? You're becoming more like me. lol
Hey, you okay? You alive? if you're sick, I'll bring you some of my family's specially-made health juice! It taste like shit, though!
SO,
WANNA TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT?
...
...
WELL...
...IT'S PROBABLY MY FAULT FOR TELLING YOU THAT STUFF YESTERDAY.
I FEEL BAD ABOUT THAT.
NO...!
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT AT ALL!
IT'S MINE!

ALL BECAUSE...
...I DID SOMETHING I SHOULDN'T HAVE.
WELL...
...EITHER WAY, IT WORKS OUT GREAT FOR ME IN THE END, I GUESS.
くる
TURN
IF YOU FINALLY GIVE UP ON YOUR TEACHER...
...THAT MEANS IT'S OKAY FOR ME TO GO AFTER HER, RIGHT?
SHE'S PROBABLY WORRIED OVER HOW YOU RAN AWAY FROM HOME.
I CAN USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO GET CLOSE TO HER WHILE GIVING UPDATES ON YOU,
THEN I'LL GIVE HER ADVICE REGARDING HER FRUITLESS LOVE.
←?

WIGGLE くね
SHE'LL GRADUALLY COME TO LEAN ON ME, SAYING, "YOU'RE SO KIND, FUMIYA-KUN..."
THIS IS IT!
I DON'T CARE IF SHE'S HAVING AN AFFAIR!
I'LL BE THE WINNER IN THE END!
WIGGLE くね
SHAKE ぶる
SHAKE ぶる
SHAKE ぶる
POUNCE
YOU ASSHOLE!
HOW CAN YOU TAUNT ME WHEN I'M SERIOUSLY DEPRESSED OVER HERE?!
THUD
SLAM
ドスバターン!
THUNK
ドタタ
BAM
HEY!
WHAT ARE YOU BOYS DOING?!
ARE YOU FIGHTING?!
NAH. NATSUO SAID HIS BODY'S STIFF FROM SITTING IN MY ROOM ALL DAY.
SO I WAS JUST HELPING HIM STRETCH.
TAP
TAP
GRAPEVINE STRETCH
I... SEE...

LOOK AT THAT.
IF YOU STILL HAVE THE ENERGY TO FIGHT ...
...THEN YOU SHOULD BE JUST FINE.
...
FOR STARTERS, THE REASON YOU'RE BROODING SO MUCH IS BECAUSE YOU'RE JUST SITTING STILL.
WHAT'S YOUR GOAL AGAIN?
TO WRITE A NOVEL.
EXACTLY.
THEN DON'T WASTE THIS VALUABLE TIME.
IT DOESN'T EVEN HAVE TO BE YOUR CURRENT STORY, JUST WRITE.
...
... YEAH.

HISS
アアア
A CHILD HAS NO PLACE SETTING FOOT...
...IN AN ADULT'S WORLD.
YOUR EYES...
...ARE STILL THOSE OF A CHILD'S.
HISS
アアア
がし SKSH
がし SKSH
がし SKSH

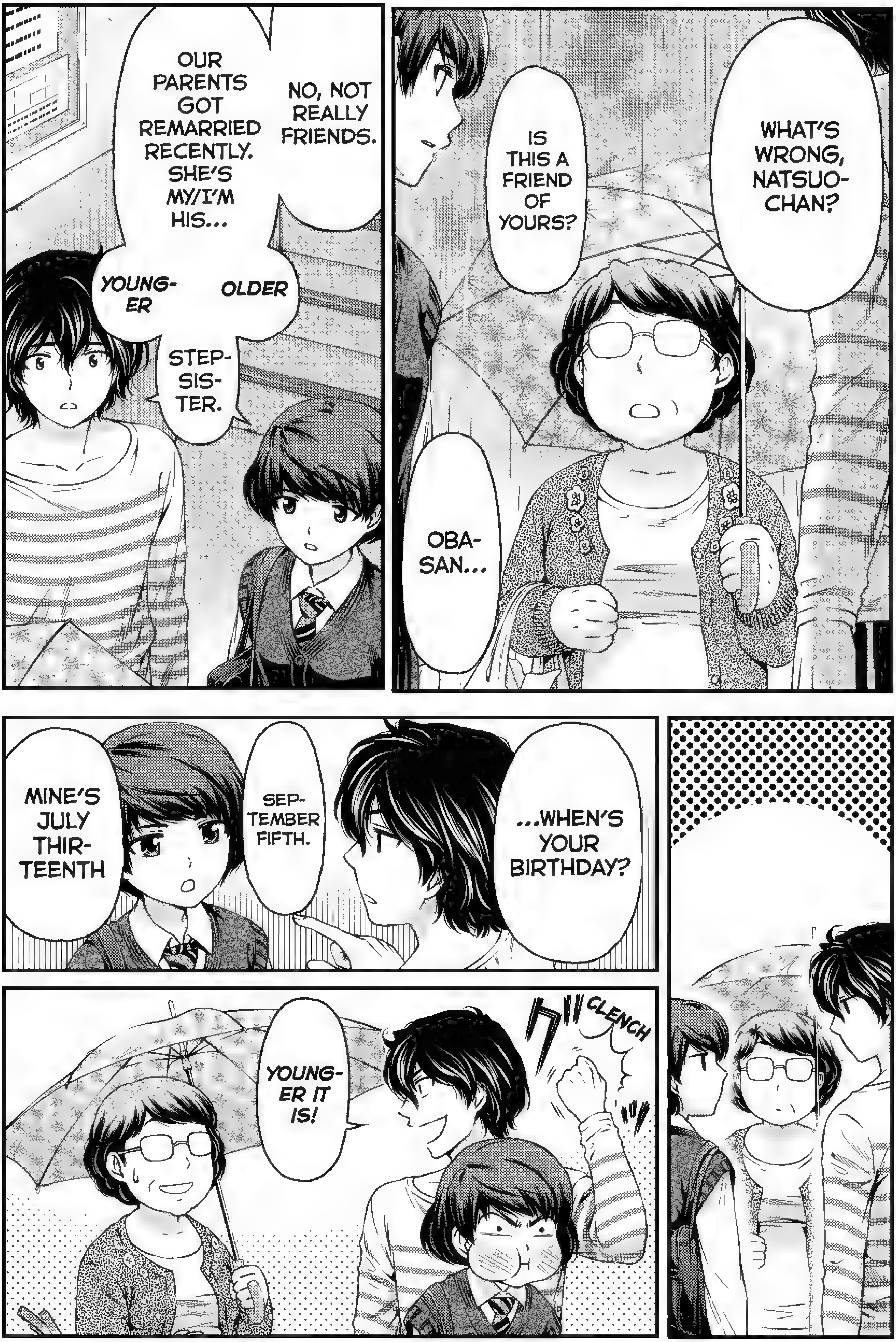
きょろ GLANCE
きょろ GLANCE
WHAT IS SHE LOOKING FOR...?
...!

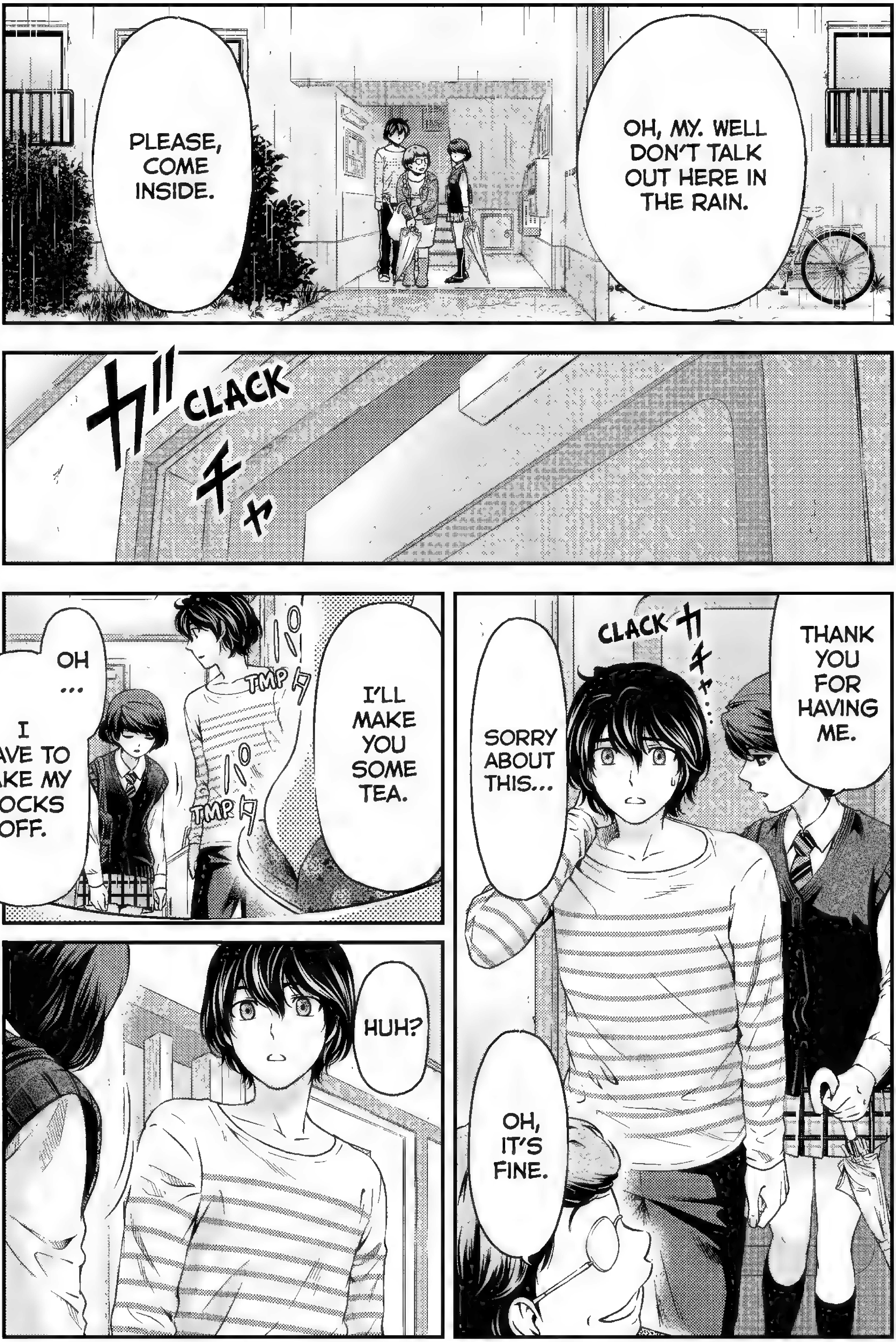
パシャ SPLASH
パシャ SPLASH
SLIDE カラ…
…
I FINALLY FOUND YOU…
IS THAT YOUR FRIEND'S HOUSE?
HUH?
OH, YEAH …
WERE YOU …
… LOOKING FOR ME?
… YEAH.
I WAS HOPING MAYBE…
…I COULD STAY THERE, TOO.

CHAPTER 7: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

IS IT OKAY...
...IF I STAY THERE, TOO?
...
WHAT?
NOT, "LET'S GO HOME TOGETHER"?
SO I CAN'T?
TURN
くるっ
FINE. I'LL LOOK FOR AN INTERNET CAFÉ, THEN.
HEY...!
WAIT, WAIT, WAIT!

JUDGING BY THE TIME, I'M GUESSING YOU DIDN'T GO TO SCHOOL.
THEN YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR ME SINCE MORNING?
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?
WHY WOULD I BE HIDING UNDER THE CAR?
I'M NOT A MISSING PET.
I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU GOT RUN OVER AND TURNED INTO COLD CUTS...
STOP IT.
AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU WANT TO STAY?
IT'S NOT REALLY MY DECISION TO MAKE IN THE FIRST PLACE...
OH?


WHAT'S WRONG, NATSUO-CHAN?
IS THIS A FRIEND OF YOURS?
OBA-SAN...
NO, NOT REALLY FRIENDS.
OUR PARENTS GOT REMARRIED RECENTLY. SHE'S MY/I'M HIS...
OLDER
YOUNGER
STEPSISTER.
...WHEN'S YOUR BIRTHDAY?
SEPTEMBER FIFTH.
MINE'S JULY THIRTEENTH
CLENCH
YOUNGER IT IS!


OH, MY. WELL DON'T TALK OUT HERE IN THE RAIN.
PLEASE, COME INSIDE.
カッ CLACK
チャ
THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME.
CLACK カチャ…
SORRY ABOUT THIS…
OH, IT'S FINE.
I'LL MAKE YOU SOME TEA.
パタ TMP
パタ TMP
OH … I HAVE TO TAKE MY SOCKS OFF.
HUH?

ぐ
SOAKED
しょ…
…
SHE WENT THROUGH THAT MUCH TROUBLE?
I BET SHE SEARCHED HIGH AND LOW FOR ME WITHOUT EVEN THINKING…
LIKE IN GARBAGE BINS…
OR WEEDS…
SPLAAASH
ジョー
I'M HOME.
WELCOME HOME. YOU'RE BACK EARLY.
THE OWNER LET ME HAVE THE DAY OFF.

...
WHY ARE THERE MORE OF YOU?
WHAT THE HELL, NATSUO?!
HOW CAN YOU BRING A GIRL OVER WHEN YOU'RE FREELOADING?!
WHOA, FUMIYA! YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG!
I'M HOME!
WHAT?! WHO IS THAT GIRL?!
DON'T TELL ME SHE'S ONII-CHAN'S GIRLFRIEND!
THAT'S RIGHT.
DON'T LIE TO YOUR SISTER WITH A STRAIGHT FACE...

WHAAAT?!
I NEVER THOUGHT THE DAY WOULD COME WHEN ONII-CHAN ACTUALLY GETS A GIRLFRIEND!
IT'S MY TIME TO BE POPULAR, AT LAST.
STARE
じと…
DON'T LOOK AT HIM LIKE THAT. HE IS HELPING US OUT, Y'KNOW.
TAKE A DIG AT HIM IF ANYTHING.
I SEE.
SO YOU HAD A FIGHT WITH YOUR BIG SISTER...
DID YOU TELL RUI-CHAN WHY YOU RAN AWAY, NATSUO?
NOT AT ALL.
IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS TRYING TO COPY YOU BY RUNNING AWAY.
WHEN DID YOU TAKE A BATH?
YOU'RE TOTALLY MAKING YOURSELF AT HOME.
What's with those excessively cute pajamas?

THIS IS JUST ...
...MY WAY OF BOYCOTTING.
BOYCOTTING?
SHE KNEW THE WHOLE TIME, APPARENTLY.
ABOUT SENSEI'S AFFAIR...
I FOUND OUT AFTER I OVER HEARD HER TALKING ON THE PHONE.
I NOTICED SHE STARTED ACTING KIND OF STRANGE A BIT BEFORE THAT.
AT ANY RATE, HINA-NEE USED TO BE CHEERFUL, FAMILY MINDED, AIRHEADED, AND HAD A STRONG SENSE OF JUSTICE.
HOLD UP.
SHOULD YOU BE CALLING ANYONE ELSE AN AIRHEAD?
I REALLY LOVED THE OLD HINA-NEE...
...SO I TRIED TO CONFRONT HER ONCE.
HINA-NEE.

ISN'T YOUR BOYFRIEND MARRIED?
THAT'S NOT RIGHT.
YOU SHOULD BREAK UP WITH HIM...
RUI ...
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN HELD BY THE ONE YOU LOVE?
HAPPY WEDDING
...
NO, BUT ...
THEN ...
...YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.
I COULDN'T SAY ANYTHING TO HER AFTER THAT.
SO, SINCE IT'S COME TO THIS, I THOUGHT I'D RUN AWAY UNTIL THEY BREAK UP.

IN OTHER WORDS, THAT ALSO LED TO HER HAVING SEX WITH YOU, HUH?
PSST
SHH!
YOU TOLD HIM?
HUH?
ERR.
THAT'S,
UHH...
DO YOU GO TO THE SAME SCHOOL AS US?
NO...
THEN I GUESS IT'S OKAY...
IT IS?!
HMM. BUT...
...YOU GUYS CAN'T JUST HIDE OUT HERE FOREVER.
...
NATSUO,
WHAT DO *YOU* WANT TO DO?

ANSWER ME HONESTLY.
OTHERWISE WE WON'T FIND AN ANSWER.
I WANT...
...TO MAKE SENSEI BREAK UP WITH HER BOYFRIEND!
RUI-CHAN WANTS HER OLD SISTER BACK...
...AND NATSUO WANTS HER TO BREAK OFF THE AFFAIR.
IN THAT CASE, WE HAVE OUR GOAL DECIDED.

TIME FOR A STRATEGY MEETING!
カ
CLACK
チャ…
HUH? THE LIGHTS ARE OFF.
DID EVERYONE ALREADY GO TO BED?

W-
WE'RE BACK...
WHY ARE YOU SITTING IN THE DARK?
CLICK
GASP
!
NATSUO!
RUI...!
OH, THANK GOODNESS!
SORRY I WAS GONE THE PAST TWO DAYS...
HUH? WHY'S THERE A DIVORCE FORM HERE?
EH? WEREN'T YOU AGAINST OUR MARRIAGE...?
HUH?!
NO! I JUST-

ぺしっ
SLAP
DAD...
IF SOME-THING IS BOTHERING YOU...
...THEN I WANT YOU TO TALK TO ME!
PLEASE, SON!
...
... SORRY.
I CAN'T REALLY TALK TO YOU ABOUT IT, THOUGH.
わーん!
WAHHH
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP

SEN-SEI ...
TEAR UP
ぶわっ
...!
SORRY ...
I'M SO SORRY ...!
WHY ARE YOU APOLOGIZING, HINA?
IT'S OUR FAULT FOR NOT BEING MORE CONSIDERATE.

AT ANY RATE...
...THANK GOD NATSUO AND RUI-CHAN CAME HOME.

...
GOOD MORNING...
ス
SWIF
MORNING...
ガタ
CLATTER
TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT.
WE'LL PROCEED AS PLANNED.

CHAPTER 8: COMMENCE OPERATION!

ALL RIGHT! WE'LL STOP HERE TODAY!
START CLEANING UP, PLEASE!

YOU'RE SURE SHE'S MEETING HIM TONIGHT?
SHE'S BEEN COMING HOME LATE TWO OR THREE DAYS A WEEK FOR A WHILE.
SHE SAID SHE'D BE HOME LATE TONIGHT, SO I'M POSITIVE.
FIRST THINGS FIRST, YOU HAVE TO LEARN ABOUT THE BOYFRIEND IN QUESTION.
TAIL HER AND CATCH THEM TOGETHER.
AAAH! I'M GETTING NERVOUS!
OH,
I BOUGHT THESE SINCE WE'LL BE HOME LATE.
ANPAN AND MILK.
ARE WE PLAYING DETECTIVE OR SOMETHING...?
THAT'S SO CLICHÉ.
ANPAN
HEY! SHE'S ON THE MOVE!

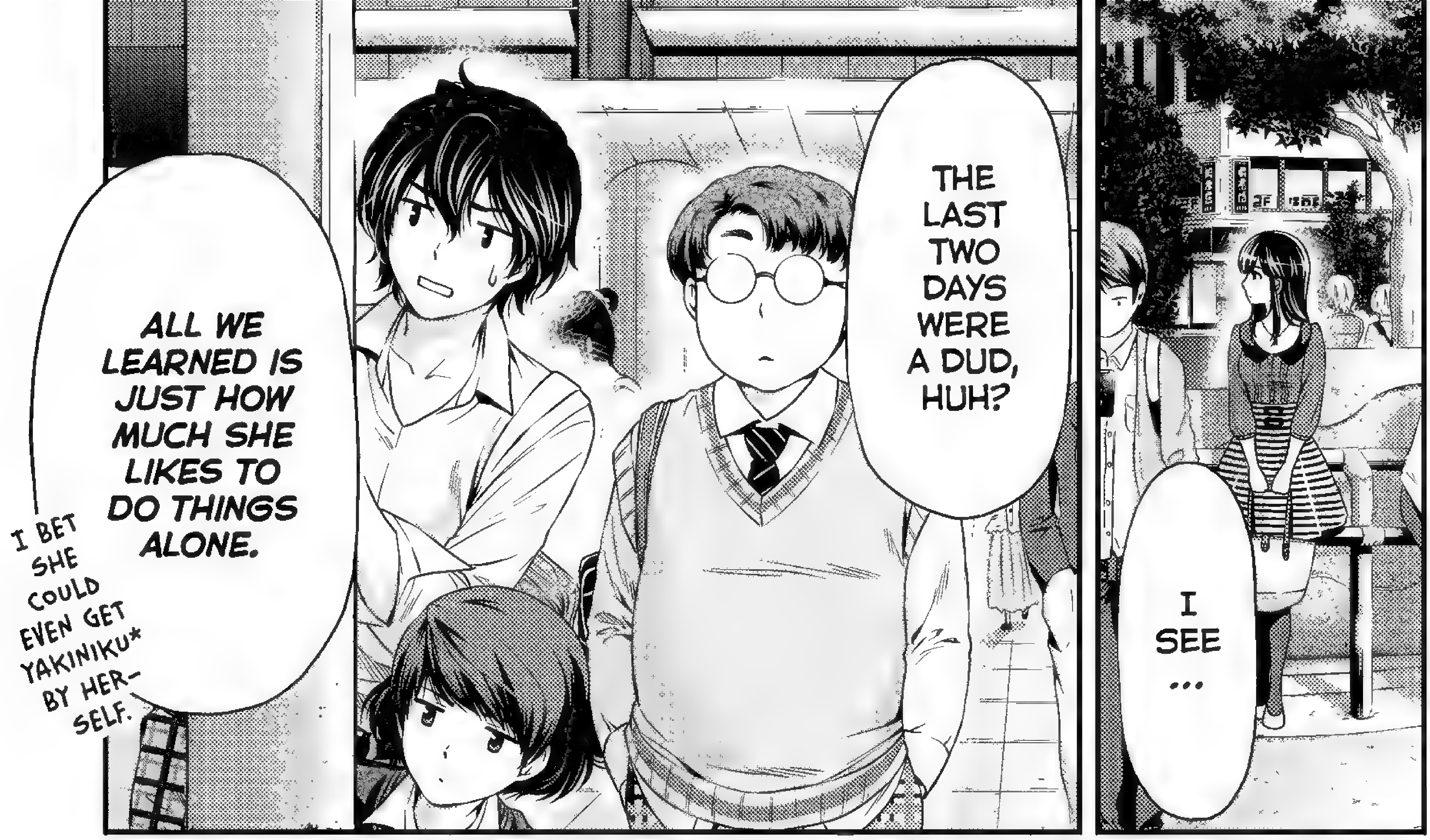
SHE WENT INTO A STANDING BAR...
MAYBE THEY'RE MEETING HERE.
BUT SHE STARTED DRINKING...
MAYBE HE'S GONNA BE LATE.
JUST WHO IS THIS GUY?
I'LL FINALLY BE ABLE TO SEE FOR MYSELF TODAY!

HEY.
WAKE UP.
!
IS HE HERE?
NO...
SHE'S BEEN DRINKING BY HERSELF FOR THE PAST FOUR HOURS.
HINA-CHAN, I THINK YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH.
I HAVE A LOT GOING ON, OKAY?!
500
RATHER, SHE'S BEEN COMPLAINING TO THE BARKEEP...
FOUR HOURS AT A STANDING BAR?
I THINK WE CAN RULE OUT THE CHANCE OF THEM MEETING TONIGHT.
LOOK, YOUR TAXI'S HERE!
BUHHH...

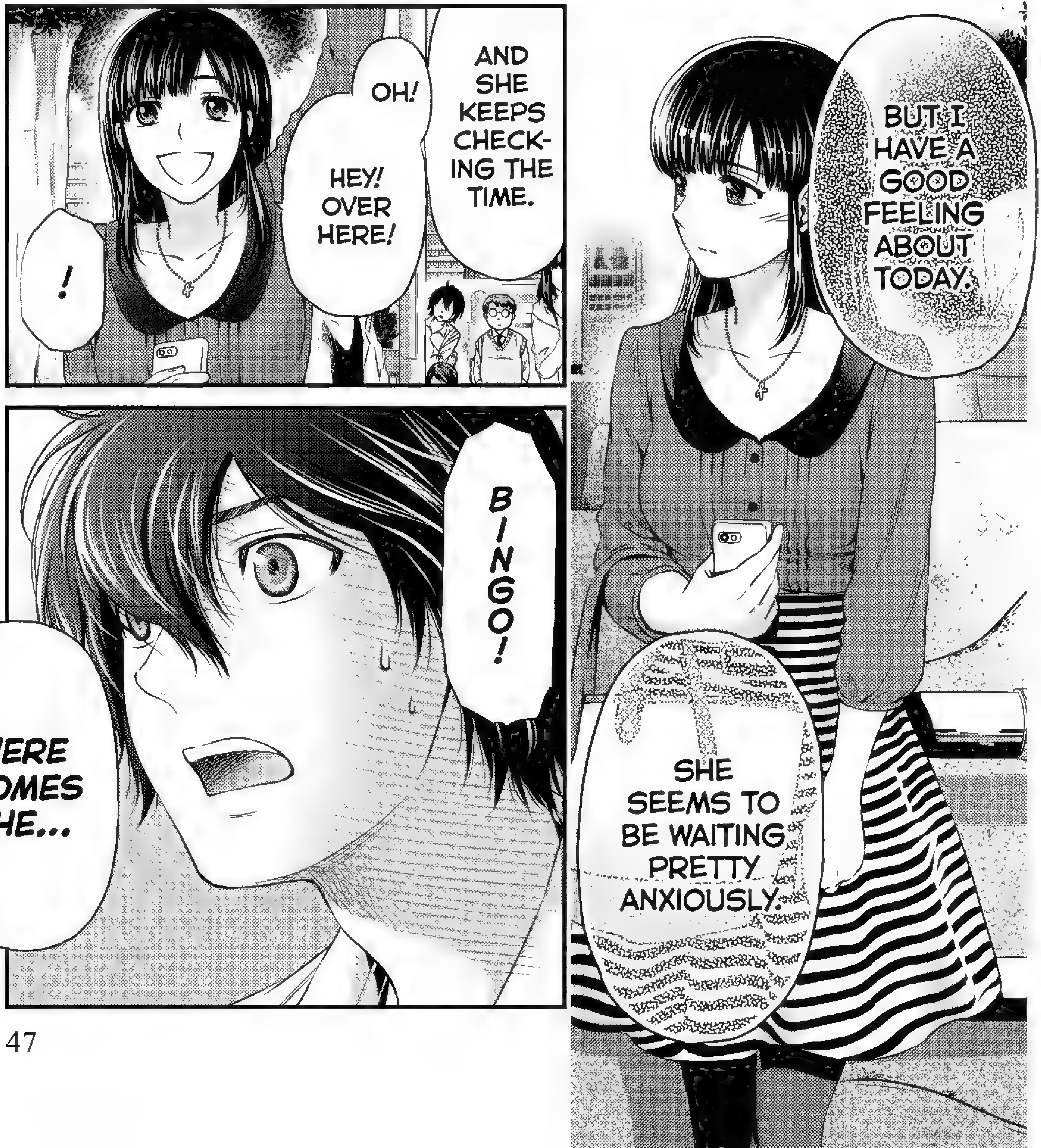
OH... COME TO THINK OF IT ...
...WHEN I WENT INTO HINA-NEE'S ROOM THE OTHER DAY...
...I SNUCK A PEEK AT THE PLANNER ON HER DESK...
...AND I SAW THAT SHE MARKED TOMORROW WITH "S."
30
S
19:00~
THAT'S IT!
THAT'S GOTTA STAND FOR "SHUU"!
THE GUY'S NAME!
SHE SURE IS IN A HURRY TODAY ...
MAYBE THEY REALLY ARE MEETING TODAY!
SEKYU
ヨドカワ

SHE'S GOING INTO THE SHOP DOWNSTAIRS!
DAMN IT... WE CAN'T FOLLOW HER LIKE THIS.
...
HEY, LOOK.
MORIPRO. AMATEUR COMEDY LIVE
SHOW 笑 TIME
~SHOWTIME~
VOL.9
FEATURING: YOSHINORI / ROCKIN & BEAN / SO
/ ACUOS / SL
!
SHRIEK
キィぃっ
THE "S" STOOD FOR "SHOWTIME?!"
MORIPRO. AMATEUR COMEDY LIVE
THANKS SO MUCH!
COME SEE US AGAIN!
SHE JUST ENJOYED THE SHOW LIKE NORMAL...

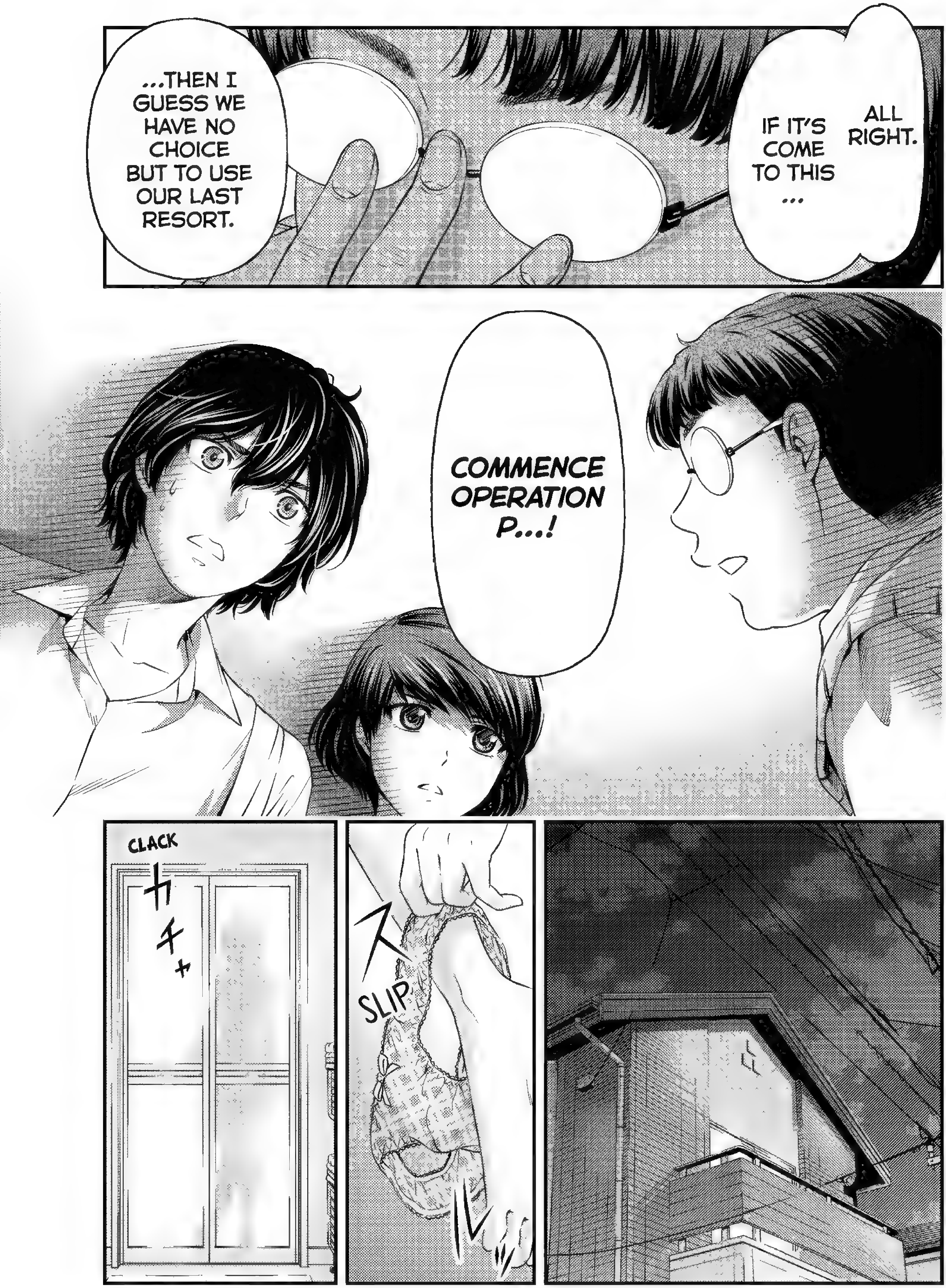
THAT WAS HILARIOUS! KEEP IT UP!
LOOKS LIKE SHE'S HEADING HOME NOW.
HE HE HE HE HE
SHE'S PLAYING BACK THE SHOW IN HER HEAD...
小和証券
コロミス


I SEE...
THE LAST TWO DAYS WERE A DUD, HUH?
ALL WE LEARNED IS JUST HOW MUCH SHE LIKES TO DO THINGS ALONE.
I BET SHE COULD EVEN GET YAKINIKU* BY HERSELF.

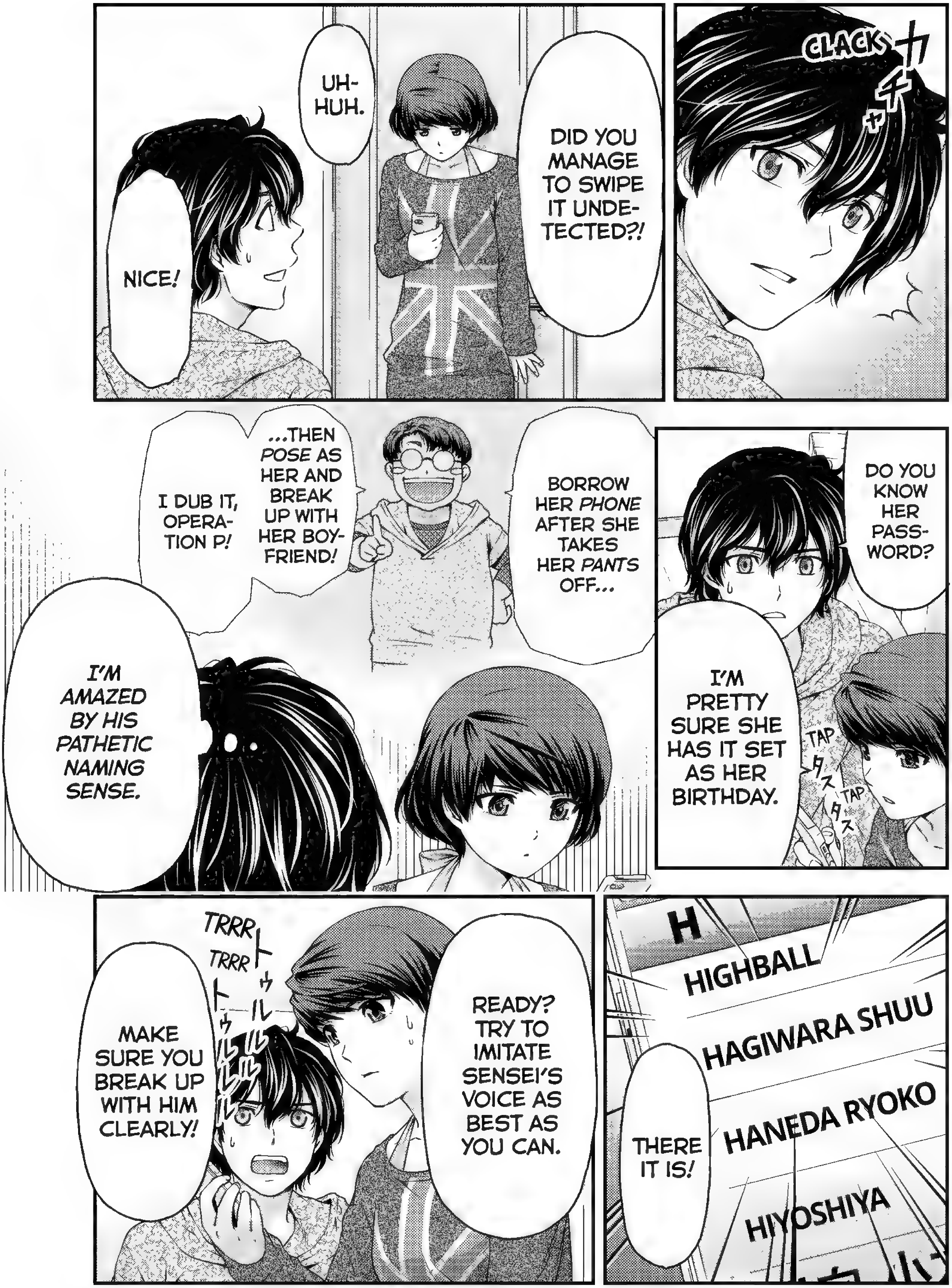
*YAKINIKU IS JAPANESE-STYLE BARBEQUE.


BUT I HAVE A GOOD FEELING ABOUT TODAY.
SHE SEEMS TO BE WAITING PRETTY ANXIOUSLY.
AND SHE KEEPS CHECKING THE TIME.
OH!
HEY! OVER HERE!
!
BINGO!
HERE COMES THE...

...GIRL ?!
WHY MEET OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL?!
THAT'S SO MISLEADING!
SKF ス SKF ス SKF ス
FROM WHAT I COULD OVERHEAR,
APPARENTLY SHE'S ONE OF SENSEI'S STUDENTS ON HER WAY BACK FROM CRAM SCHOOL.
THEY'RE JUST TALKING ABOUT PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.
HMM.
SO FAR ...
...I JUST GET THE FEELING SHE'S A GOOD TEACHER ENJOYING HER DAILY LIFE.
I WONDER WHY SHE'S EVEN HAVING AN AFFAIR...


ALL RIGHT.
IF IT'S COME TO THIS ...
...THEN I GUESS WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO USE OUR LAST RESORT.
COMMENCE OPERATION P...!
ス
SLIP
カチャ
CLACK

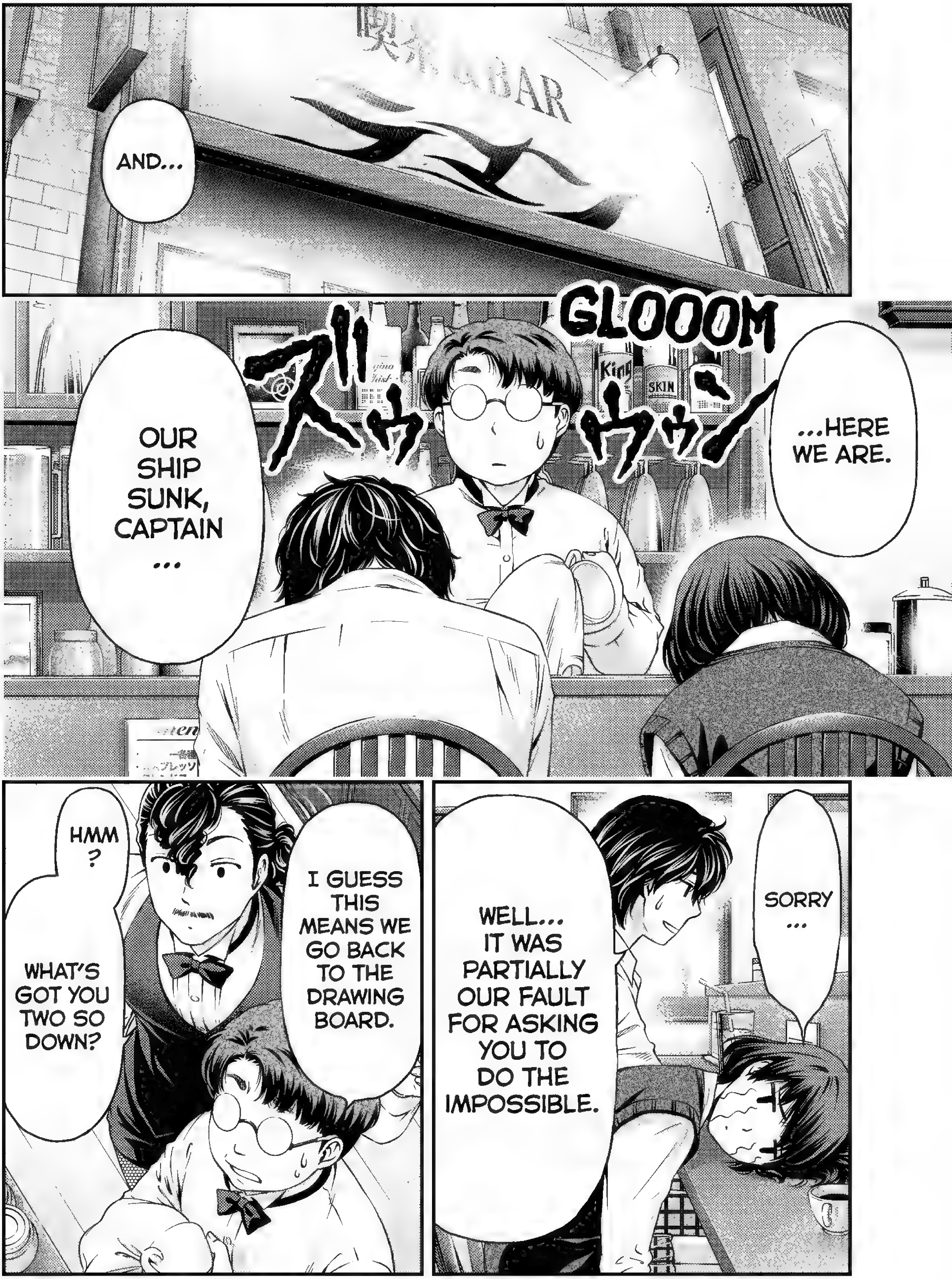
シHャー
アS
アS
アS
アS
ニSャ
Sア
Sア
Sア
SWIP
ニSャ
アS
アS
アS


CLACK カチャ
DID YOU MANAGE TO SWIPE IT UNDETECTED?!
UH-HUH.
NICE!
DO YOU KNOW HER PASSWORD?
I'M PRETTY SURE SHE HAS IT SET AS HER BIRTHDAY.
TAP タス TAP タス
BORROW HER *PHONE* AFTER SHE TAKES HER *PANTS* OFF...
...THEN *POSE* AS HER AND BREAK UP WITH HER BOYFRIEND!
I DUB IT, OPERATION P!
I'M AMAZED BY HIS PATHETIC NAMING SENSE.
H
HIGHBALL
HAGIWARA SHUU
HANEDA RYOKO
HIYOSHIYA
THERE IT IS!
READY? TRY TO IMITATE SENSEI'S VOICE AS BEST AS YOU CAN.
TRRR TRRR トゥルルル トゥルルル
MAKE SURE YOU BREAK UP WITH HIM CLEARLY!

HELLO?
...
HINA-CHAN?
U- UMM...
ERR... I...
BOOP
HEEEY!
M- MY HEAD WENT BLANK AS SOON AS I HEARD HIS VOICE...
YEAH... I COULD TELL.
CRAP. I FORGOT SHE HAS TROUBLE COMMUNICATING!
I HAVE TO DECIDE WHAT I'M GOING TO SAY BEFOREHAND...

ピロB ピロB
ルR ルR ルR ルR ルR ルR
ッ ッ
!
Y- YES?
HELLO?
TELL HIM YOU WANT TO BREAK UP!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
HUH?
S- SOMETHING...?
NO, I...
IT- IT'S NOTHING!
BOOP
...
IT'S NO USE...
ズーン… GLOOM

SIGN: CAFÉ & BAR / L'AMANT


AND...
...HERE WE ARE.
GLOOOM
ズ''ゥウゥン
OUR SHIP SUNK, CAPTAIN...
SORRY...
WELL... IT WAS PARTIALLY OUR FAULT FOR ASKING YOU TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE.
I GUESS THIS MEANS WE GO BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD.
HMM?
WHAT'S GOT YOU TWO SO DOWN?

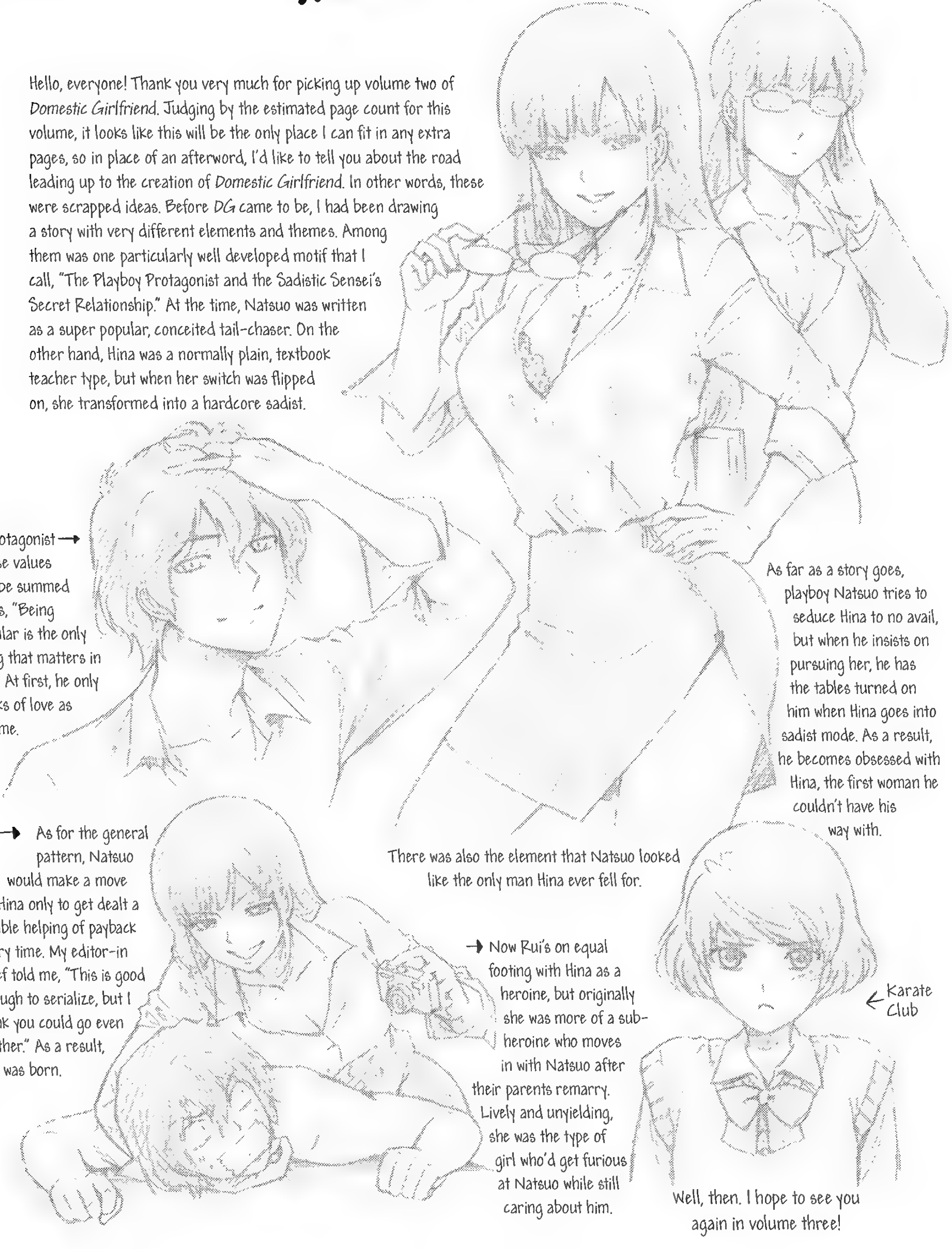
BOSS ...
ACTUALLY, SOMEONE CLOSE TO NATSUO IS HAVING AN AFFAIR, SO WE'RE TRYING TO GET THEM TO BREAK IT OFF.
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS, KOBAYASHI-SAN?
AH, HA, HA!
FOR REAL?! OF COURSE I DON'T!
ALSO, I TOLD YOU TO CALL ME MARIE!
THIS IS NO LAUGHING MATTER!
WE'RE SERIOUSLY WRACKING OUR BRAINS HERE...
I KNOW.
I'M SORRY.
IT'S JUST ...
...I WAS THINKING...
...IT SURE IT GREAT TO BE YOUNG.
YOU KIDS ARE DAZZLING.
HUH ...?
JINGLE JINGLE
カラン
カラーン

AH...
IT'S HIM...

CHAPTER 9: CONFRONTATION

BONUS PROJECT
DOMESTIC GIRLFRIEND: IN THE MAKING ①

Hello, everyone! Thank you very much for picking up volume two of *Domestic Girlfriend*. Judging by the estimated page count for this volume, it looks like this will be the only place I can fit in any extra pages, so in place of an afterword, I'd like to tell you about the road leading up to the creation of *Domestic Girlfriend*. In other words, these were scrapped ideas. Before *DG* came to be, I had been drawing a story with very different elements and themes. Among them was one particularly well developed motif that I call, "The Playboy Protagonist and the Sadistic Sensei's Secret Relationship." At the time, Natsuo was written as a super popular, conceited tail-chaser. On the other hand, Hina was a normally plain, textbook teacher type, but when her switch was flipped on, she transformed into a hardcore sadist.



A protagonist → whose values can be summed up as, "Being popular is the only thing that matters in life!" At first, he only thinks of love as a game.

As far as a story goes, playboy Natsuo tries to seduce Hina to no avail, but when he insists on pursuing her, he has the tables turned on him when Hina goes into sadist mode. As a result, he becomes obsessed with Hina, the first woman he couldn't have his way with.

There was also the element that Natsuo looked like the only man Hina ever fell for.

→ As for the general pattern, Natsuo would make a move on Hina only to get dealt a double helping of payback every time. My editor-in chief told me, "This is good enough to serialize, but I think you could go even further." As a result, DG was born.

→ Now Rui's on equal footing with Hina as a heroine, but originally she was more of a sub-heroine who moves in with Natsuo after their parents remarry. Lively and unyielding, she was the type of girl who'd get furious at Natsuo while still caring about him.

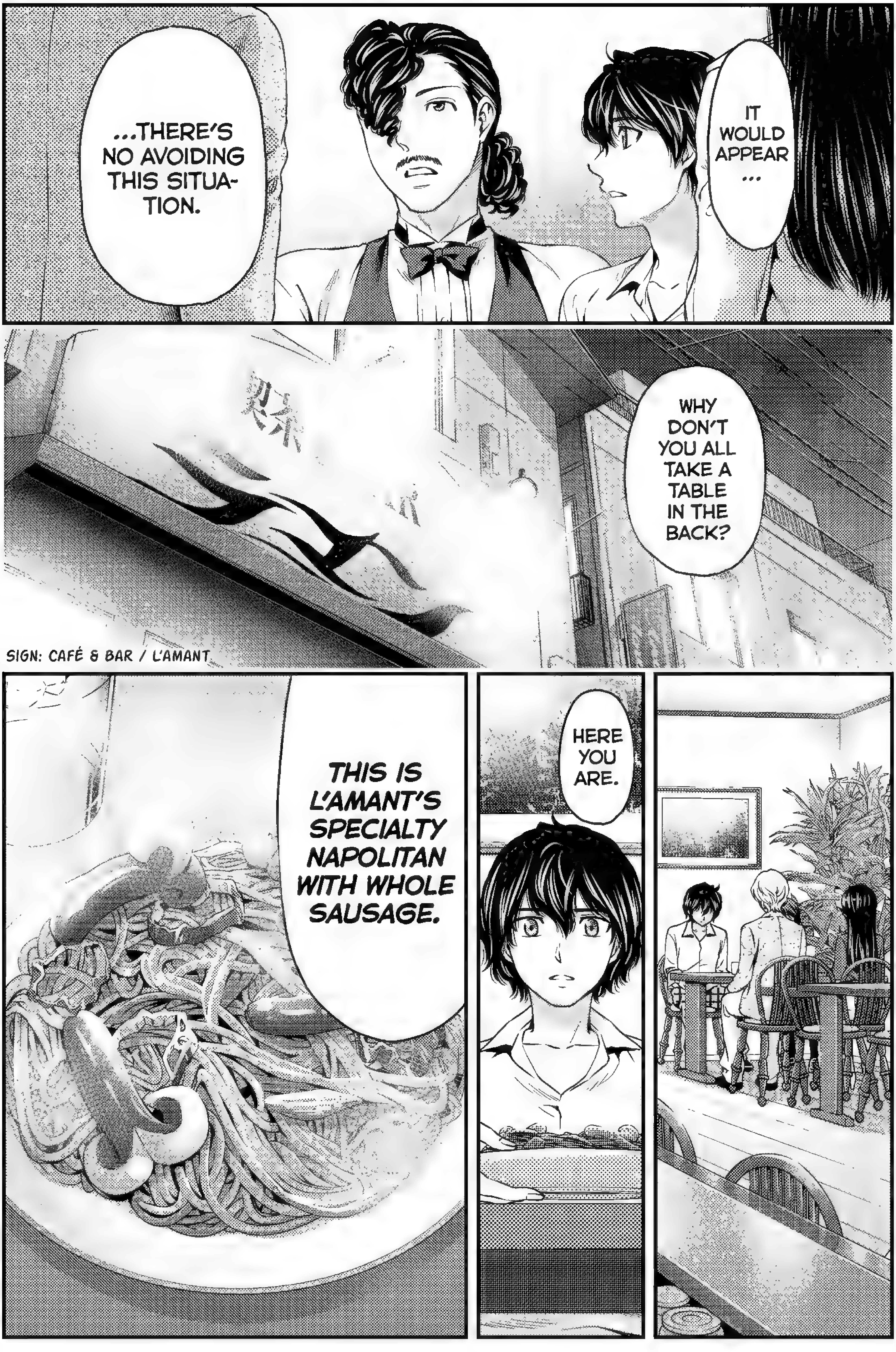
← Karate Club

Well, then. I hope to see you again in volume three!

RUI ...
NATSUO-KUN ...!
STUDENTS OF YOURS?
AH ...
SH- SHE'S MY LITTLE SISTER ...
...AND HE'S MY STEPBROTHER FROM MY MOTHER'S REMARRIAGE.
HINA-NEE ...
ガタッ
CLUNK

PLEASE ...
...BREAK UP WITH SENSEI!

NA-
NATSUO-KUN...!
YOU'RE MARRIED, AREN'T YOU?!
GRAB
IF YOU HAVE ANY SENSE OF DECENCY, THEN PLEASE BREAK UP WITH HER RIGHT NOW!
ざわ
CHATTER...
DON'T MAKE SENSEI SUFFER WITH THIS HALF-BAKED RELATIONSHIP!
I'M SURE YOU MIGHT BE ENJOYING IT, BUT...
GRAB
CALM DOWN.
I WON'T ALLOW VIOLENCE IN THIS STORE.


IT WOULD APPEAR...
...THERE'S NO AVOIDING THIS SITUATION.
WHY DON'T YOU ALL TAKE A TABLE IN THE BACK?
HERE YOU ARE.
THIS IS L'AMANT'S SPECIALTY NAPOLITAN WITH WHOLE SAUSAGE.

SIGN: CAFÉ & BAR / L'AMANT

PEOPLE TEND TO GET IRRITABLE WHEN THEY'RE HUNGRY.
EAT UP AND HAVE A CIVIL DISCUSSION.
IT'S MY TREAT.
IN THIS SITUATION, YOUR STORE'S NAME AND MENU COULDN'T BE MORE IRONIC.
L'AMANT = LOVER
WOW...
YOU COULD CUT THE TENSION WITH A KNIFE!
WHY ARE YOU GETTING EXCITED?
NOW, NOW. THAT'S NO GOOD.
THIS IS NO LAUGHING MATTER FOR THEM.
WE CAN'T LET OURSELVES BE THE ONLY ONES WHO ENJOY IT.
WE HAVE TO TURN THIS INTO A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY!
I'M GONNA POST THIS UP IN FRONT OF THE STATION.
NOW!
A CAFÉ WHERE YOU CAN WATCH PANDEMONIUM BETWEEN LOVERS UNFOLD.
L'AMANT
STOP THAT RIGHT NOW.
AT THE VERY LEAST, WE'LL GATHER NUMBERS COMPARABLE TO AN UNDERGROUND IDOL LIVE SHOW.
NO MEANS NO!
UMM...

...WHERE SHOULD I BEGIN, I WONDER?
IT'S HARD TO SPEAK UNDER SO MUCH PRESSURE.
YOU GUYS...
IT'S ALL RIGHT. I'LL JUST START BY INTRODUCING MYSELF.
MY NAME IS SHUU HAGIWARA.
I'M 32 YEARS OLD,
MARRIED WITH NO CHILDREN.
I CURRENTLY WORK AS A BIOLOGY RESEARCHER AT A UNIVERSITY LAB.
FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS...
...I'VE HAD THE PLEASURE OF DATING HINA-SAN.
...!

SINCE EVEN BEFORE...
...I MET SENSEI...
WHO WAS IT?
WHICH OF YOU...
...ASKED THE OTHER OUT?
WHICH OF YOU IS GUILTY DEPENDS ON THAT.

...
WHICH OF US IS "GUILTY," HUH?
WE NEVER REALLY OFFICIALLY AGREED TO START DATING.
BUT I WAS THE ONE MADE THE FIRST MOVE,
SO I SUPPOSE I'M GUILTY.
I'D LIKE TO APOLOGIZE IF THIS HAS CAUSED YOU ANY GRIEF.
SENSEI...
I'VE NEVER...
...SEEN HER WITH THAT EXPRESSION BEFORE.

I HEARD THAT HINA-SAN MOVED AND HAD HER FAMILY GROW RECENTLY.
TO BE HONEST, I'D WANTED TO VISIT YOU PROPERLY...
RATHER THAN HAVE OUR RELATIONSHIP "FOUND OUT" LIKE THIS.
HUH ...?
VISIT US?
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT POSITION YOU'RE IN?
WHAT IT IS YOU'RE DOING?
YOU'RE HAVING AN AFFAIR!
YOU HAVE A WIFE AT HOME, DON'T YOU?
YOU'VE GOTTA BE NUTS IF YOU CAN EVEN THINK OF VISITING YOUR MISTRESS'S FAMILY LIKE NOTHING'S WRONG!
THAT'S RUDE TO BOTH YOUR WIFE AND SENSEI!
DON'T YOU FEEL SORRY IN THE SLIGHTEST?!

...
I DO ...
BUT EVEN SO...
...I STILL LOVE HINA-CHAN.
I ASSURE YOU I'M NOT JUST FOOLING AROUND.
I'M VERY SERIOUS.
NATSUO-KUN, WAS IT?
YOU SEEM TO RESENT ME DUE TO THE FACT THAT I'M MARRIED, CORRECT?
IN THAT CASE ...

...IF I GET DIVORCED...
...WILL YOU GIVE US YOUR BLESSING?
...!
...
AS IF I CAN TRUST YOU...
I HARDLY THINK SOMEONE WHO MAKES SENSEI CRY AT THIS POINT...
...COULD EVER MAKE HER HAPPY.
WHAT?
NATSUO-KUN...!

YOU CRIED ...?
...
SWIF
I'M SO SORRY ...
!! ...
I HAD NO IDEA YOU WERE SUFFERING THAT MUCH.
BUT ...
I TOLD YOU BEFORE, DIDN'T I?
I *WANT* TO THROW AWAY EVERYTHING IN ORDER TO BE WITH YOU...
...BUT THINGS JUST AREN'T THAT SIMPLE.
I NEED A LITTLE MORE TIME.
THEN ...
HEY!
WOULD YOU JUST-
GRAB

R-
RUI…
…OH.
THE NAPOLITAN…
DASH
HEY…!

カラン
コローン
JINGLE JANG
TH-
THERE IT IS! THE FABLED WATER SPLASH!
I'M SO MOVED!
WHOA... IT REALLY DID TURN INTO BEDLAM.
I'LL GO CLEAN UP~!
I DIDN'T THINK RUI WOULD DO THAT...
OH? I'M SURE HE SAW THAT MUCH COMING.
I SEE.
WELL,
HE PROBABLY DIDN'T EXPECT RUI-RUI TO BE THE FIRST ONE TO SNAP.

GRAB
H- HOLD UP...
JUST HOW LONG ARE YOU GONNA KEEP RUNNING?!
WHEEZE ぜェ
ぜェ PANT
WE'VE EASILY BEEN RUNNING FOR OVER TEN MINUTES!
ぜェ WHEEZE
I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL, BUT...
I DIDN'T TELL YOU TO FOLLOW ME.

IF YOU HADN'T DONE THAT...
...THEN I WOULD HAVE.
ERR...
ACTUALLY, MAYBE IT WAS BETTER THAT YOU DID IT.
I MIGHT HAVE PUNCHED HIM, INSTEAD.
I FORGOT ABOUT THAT OPTION...
OH?
WANNA GO BEAT HIM UP TOGETHER, THEN?
WE WON'T BOTHER ANYONE IF IT'S OUTSIDE THE STORE.

GO FOR IT.
GIVE HIM MY SHARE TOO WHILE YOU'RE AT IT.
WHOA...
WAY TO HANG ME OUT TO DRY.
I DON'T WANT TO SEE THAT JERK'S FACE EVER AGAIN.
...I'M NOT SURPRISED.
SHE WAS ABSOLUTELY FURIOUS...
...TO WATCH HER BELOVED BIG SISTER GET PLAYED LIKE THAT.
...TRATED...

I'M SO FRUSTRATED ...!

SABURO
FUKUTAN
JINGLE
カラーン…
I'M SORRY... ABOUT MY LITTLE SISTER.
IT'S OKAY. THE OWNER REPLACED THE NAPOLITAN, ANYWAY. THAT WAS TASTY.
KIDS THEIR AGE HAVE A PARTICULARLY STRONG SENSE OF JUSTICE.
I CAN UNDERSTAND THE DESIRE TO ASSERT WHAT IS "RIGHT" THAT STRONGLY.
...
THERE'S ONE OTHER THING I REALIZED ASIDE FROM THEIR OBJECTION.

NATSUO-KUN...
...IS IN LOVE WITH YOU, ISN'T HE?
AND HOW...
...DO YOU FEEL?

WHAT?
ABOUT NATSUO-KUN.
DON'T BE SILLY.
HE'S JUST A CHILD.
OH?
YOU DON'T REALLY SEEM TO THINK THAT TO ME.
STOP MAKING ABSURD ASSUMPTIONS.
THEY'RE BOTH IMPORTANT FAMILY TO ME.

SORRY, SORRY.
IT WAS JUST A JOKE.
AND...
AFTER SEEING MY IMPORTANT FAMILY TODAY...
...I'VE MADE UP MY MIND.
I THINK...
...WE SHOULDN'T SEE EACH OTHER FOR A WHILE.

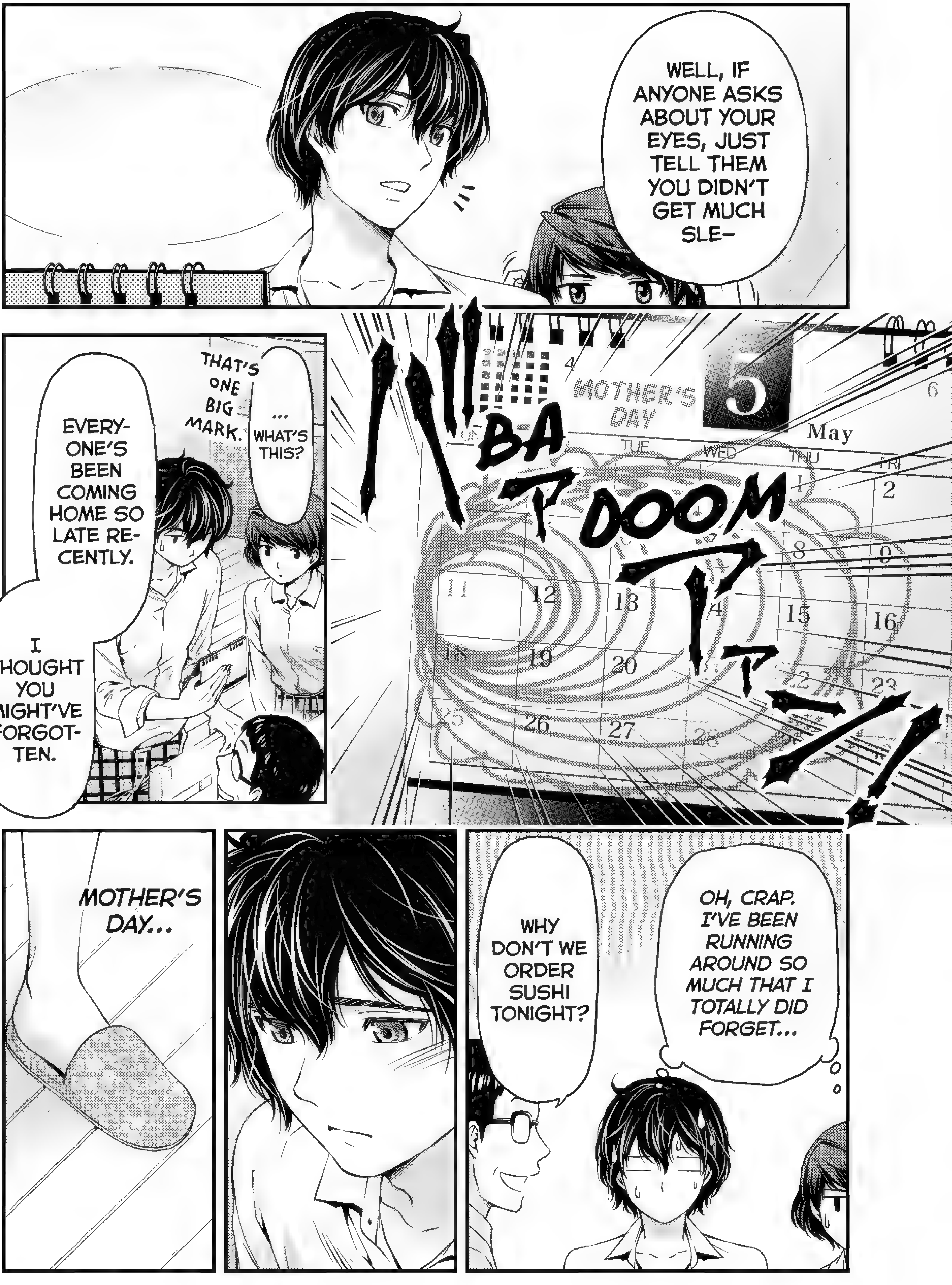
CHAPTER 10: REPORT

I THINK...
...WE SHOULDN'T SEE EACH OTHER FOR A WHILE.
YOU MEAN...
...YOU WANT TO BREAK UP?
...
PULL
I DON'T WANT TO HURT THOSE TWO ANY-

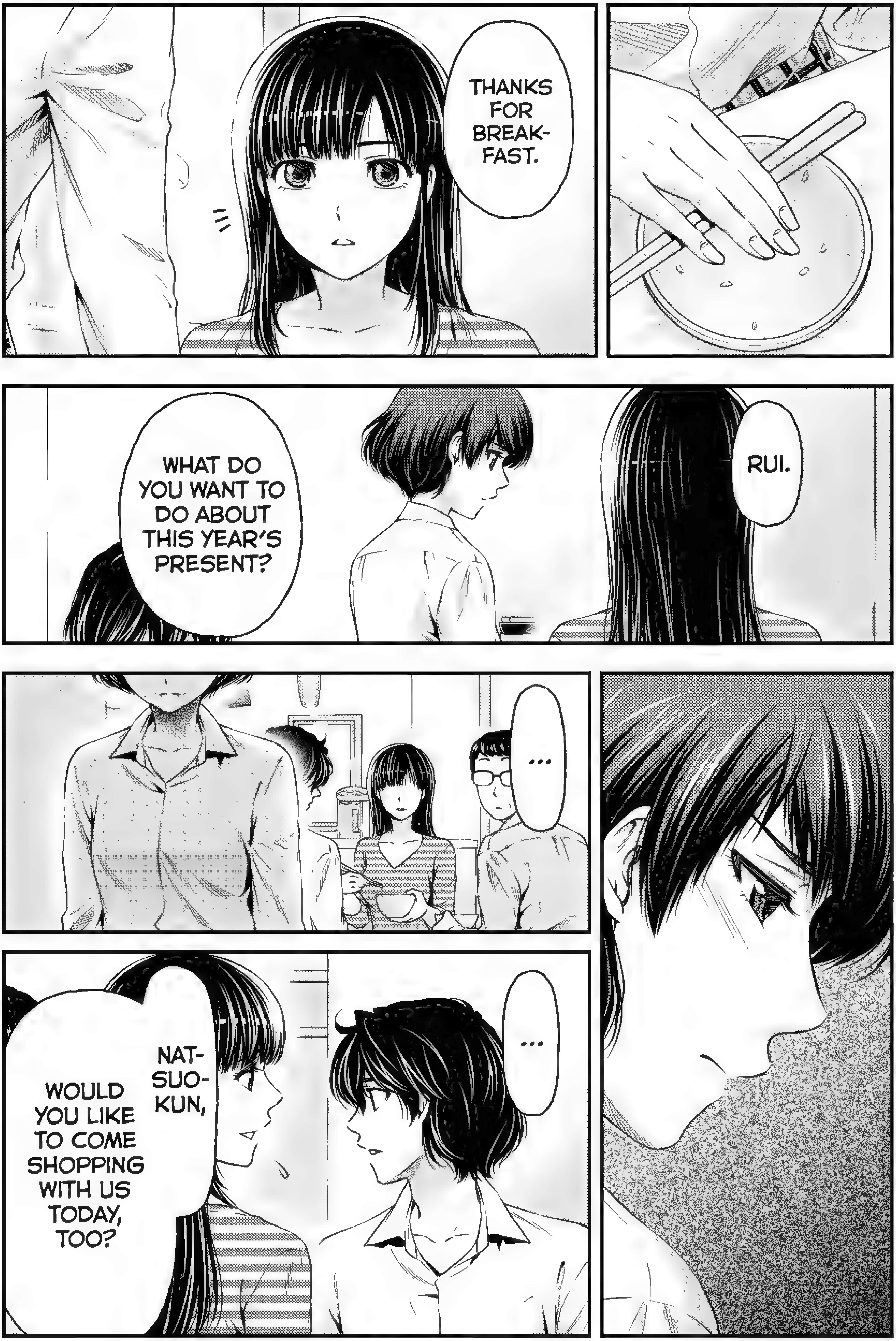
HUH?
HEY...
SHUUI
ヒュ WHEW
ッ
AND WHAT ABOUT YOU?
NOT THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU.
HOW DO *YOU* FEEL?
...

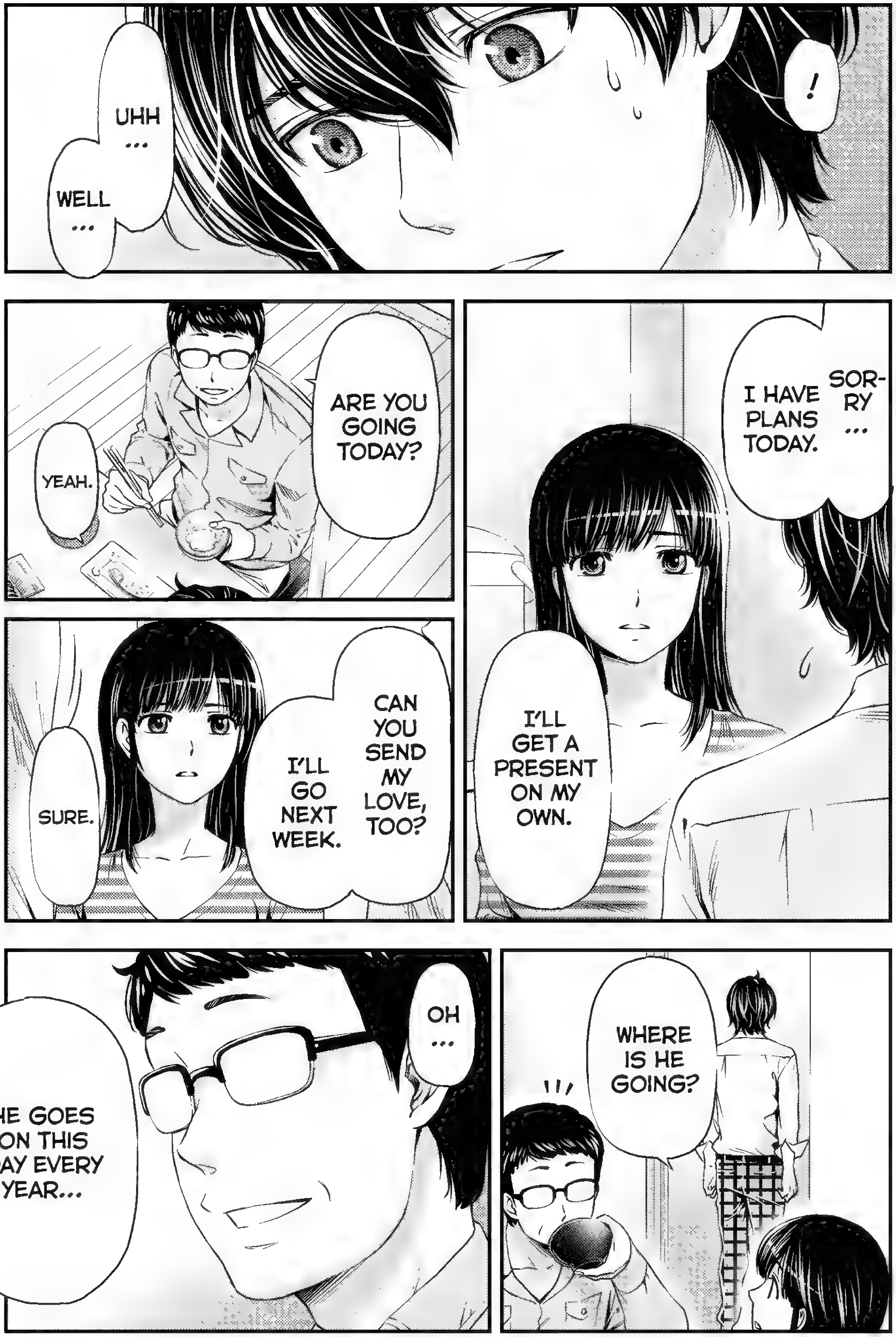
ピ BEEP ピ BEEP ピ BEEP ピッ BEEP
ピ BEEP ピ BEEP ピ BEEP ピッ BEEP
ピ BEEP ピ BEEP ピ… BEEP
バッ SMACK
TEXAS
…
カラ… SLIDE

!
!
TURN くるっ
OH... IT'S YOU.
THAT STARTLED ME.
WHAT,
YOUR HAIR GETS FRIZZY, TOO?
UH-HUH.
NOT AS MUCH AS YOURS, THOUGH.
I'D SAY YOU'RE GIVING ME A RUN FOR MY MONEY.
ARE MY EYES STILL PUFFY?
A LITTLE.
HMM...
HEY...
ARE YOU OKAY NOW?
...
YEAH.


WELL, IF ANYONE ASKS ABOUT YOUR EYES, JUST TELL THEM YOU DIDN'T GET MUCH SLE–
5
May
MOTHER'S DAY
BA DOOM
...WHAT'S THIS?
THAT'S ONE BIG MARK.
EVERYONE'S BEEN COMING HOME SO LATE RECENTLY.
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT'VE FORGOTTEN.
OH, CRAP. I'VE BEEN RUNNING AROUND SO MUCH THAT I TOTALLY DID FORGET...
WHY DON'T WE ORDER SUSHI TONIGHT?
MOTHER'S DAY...

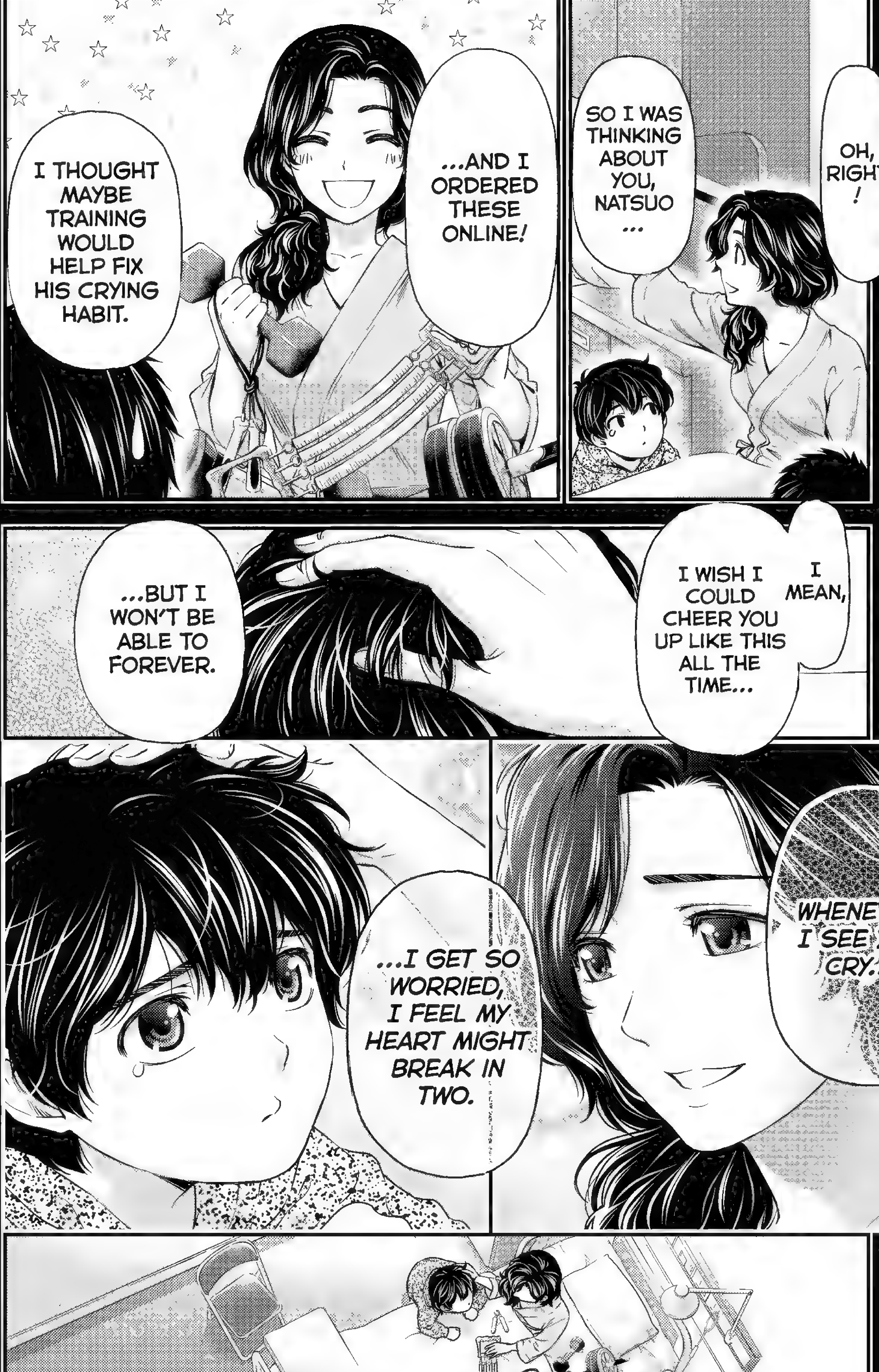
WOW!
WHAT A BIG FLOWER MARK.
...!
DID YOU DRAW IT, FUJII-SAN?
THAT'S RIGHT.
DID YOU REMEMBER MOTHER'S DAY?
OF COURSE!
THE TWO OF US SHOPPED FOR A PRESENT TOGETHER EVERY YEAR.
RIGHT,
RUI?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO FORCE YOURSELVES, OKAY?
WHAT?
WE'VE NEVER FORCED OURSELVES!
...
...


THANKS FOR BREAKFAST.
RUI.
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO ABOUT THIS YEAR'S PRESENT?
...
...
NATSUO-KUN,
WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME SHOPPING WITH US TODAY, TOO?


!
UHH...
WELL...
SORRY...
I HAVE PLANS TODAY.
I'LL GET A PRESENT ON MY OWN.
ARE YOU GOING TODAY?
YEAH.
CAN YOU SEND MY LOVE, TOO?
I'LL GO NEXT WEEK.
SURE.
WHERE IS HE GOING?
OH...
HE GOES ON THIS DAY EVERY YEAR...

...TO VISIT HIS MOM.

SLIDE
カラララ
OOP!
I HAD A FEELING HE WAS HERE.
HI, DEAR.
IS NATSUO CRYING AGAIN?
HE SAYS HE COULDN'T FIND ANYONE DURING HIDE-AND-SEEK.
HA HA HA
はははっ
I GUESS BECOMING A FIRST GRADER DIDN'T MAKE HIM ANY LESS OF A CRYBABY.


OH, RIGHT!
SO I WAS THINKING ABOUT YOU, NATSUO...
...AND I ORDERED THESE ONLINE!
I THOUGHT MAYBE TRAINING WOULD HELP FIX HIS CRYING HABIT.
I MEAN,
I WISH I COULD CHEER YOU UP LIKE THIS ALL THE TIME...
...BUT I WON'T BE ABLE TO FOREVER.
WHENEVER I SEE YOU CRY...
...I GET SO WORRIED, I FEEL MY HEART MIGHT BREAK IN TWO.

NAT-SUO,
DID YOU SAY GOODBYE TO MOM?
NAT-SUO...
IT'S OKAY... TO CRY TODAY.
ぶん SHAKE
ぶん SHAKE
ぶん SHAKE

MOM ...
...WILL BE SAD.
RUSTLE くしゃ…
...
IT'S OKAY, SON...
JUST FOR TODAY ...
...MOM WILL UNDER-STAND.

TEN YEARS, HUH?
TO BE HONEST, I'VE LONG SINCE GOTTEN USED TO IT,
BUT SOMETIMES I STILL WONDER HOW THINGS WOULD BE IF SHE WERE STILL ALIVE.
...
I WONDER WHAT MOM WOULD SAY...
...IF SHE COULD SEE ME NOW.

...!
HUH? HOW'D YOU GUYS KNOW...?
FUJII-SAN TOLD US.
WE STILL HADN'T GREETED HER SINCE WE BECAME A FAMILY.
OH! I WANTED TO BRING AN OFFERING...
...SO I ASKED FUJII-SAN WHAT YOUR MOTHER'S FAVORITE WAS.
CHESTNUT MONAKA* FROM TAKANO SWEETS.
ALSO, I ALREADY TOLD RUI...
...BUT I THOUGHT I SHOULD REPORT TO YOU AND YOUR MOM, TOO.

*A JAPANESE SWEET MADE OF SWEET BEAN JAM SANDWICHED BETWEEN TWO WAFERS.

I BROKE UP WITH SHUU-SAN...
...AND AM WHOLESOMELY SINGLE AGAIN.
UM ...
I KNOW I PUSHED YOU TO BREAK UP AND ALL...
BUT ARE YOU OKAY WITH IT?
HE'D BEEN TELLING ME HE WAS GOING TO LEAVE HIS WIFE, OR NOT, FOR ABOUT SIX MONTHS.
I HAD A FEELING IT WAS NEVER GOING TO HAPPEN, BUT I JUST COULDN'T GIVE UP ON HIM.
HE WAS MY FIRST LOVE, AFTER ALL...

BUT THEN I REALIZED...
YOU GUYS ARE MORE IMPORTANT TO ME.
I'M SORRY, FOR EVERYTHING.
...
THAT'S GOOD NEWS, HUH?
...YEAH.
...
THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN HER SMILE.
ALL RIGHT, LET'S SAY HI, SHALL WE?
RUI, WILL YOU PLACE THE FLOWERS?
HINA, WE'RE NATSUO-KUN'S NEW FAMILY,
AND RUI.
WE HOPE...
YOU'LL WATCH OVER US.

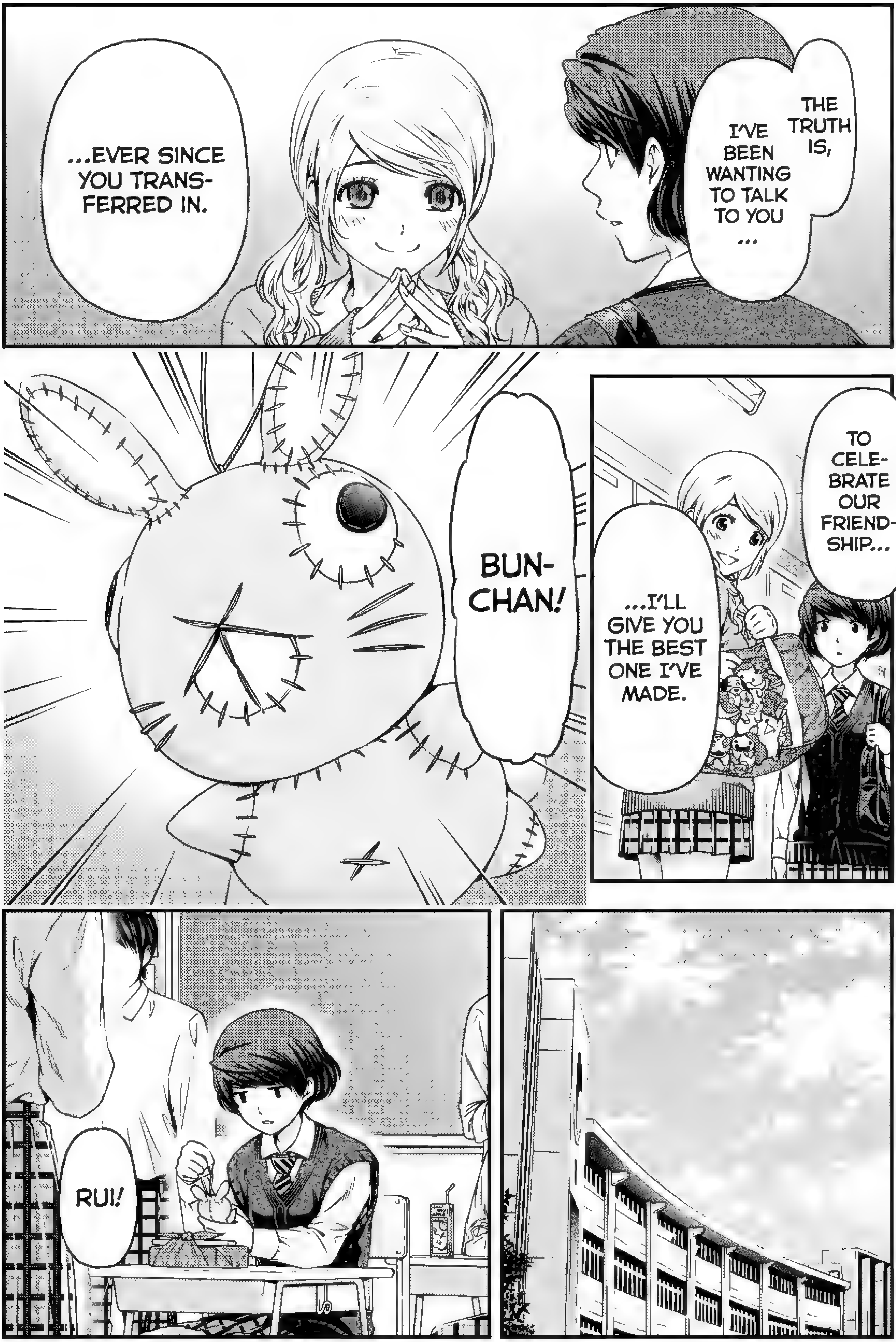
CHAPTER 11: A NEW LOVE

HINA-NEE, YOU LEFT YOUR ASPARAGUS AGAIN.
BUT IT'S EVEN MORE PUNGENT THAN USUAL TODAY...
AREN'T YOU EMBARRASSED TO BE A PICKY EATER AT YOUR AGE?
YOU LIKE ASPARAGUS, RIGHT?
YOU CAN HAVE MINE.
WHIP
NO WAY! EAT YOUR OWN!
THIS IS WHY YOUR SKIN'S BEEN SO DRY LATELY!
NUH-UH... THAT'S PROBABLY THE ALCOHOL'S FAULT...
THEN ALL THE MORE REASON YOU SHOULD EAT YOUR VEGETABLES!

I'M KINDA RELIEVED
THAT YOU GUYS CAN TALK LIKE NORMAL AGAIN.
HUH?
SISTERS SHOULD ALWAYS BE ON GOOD TERMS.
IT'S ONE THING SINCE I'M KIND OF THE NEWCOMER...
...BUT WHEN YOU TWO ARE AT ODDS, THE WHOLE HOUSE FEELS TENSE.
...
THAT REMINDS ME.
WHAT MADE YOU RUN AWAY FROM HOME IN THE FIRST PLACE?
ギクッ
TWITCH
HUH...?
ERM...
THAT'S, UHH...

DASH
I— I FORGOT!
...
HOW DO YOU FORGET SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
MAYBE HE FOUND A NAUGHTY DVD OR SOMETHING.

SUPER WEIRD!
AH ...
TACHIBANA-SAN!
GOOD MORNING. ♥
... MORNING.
DO YOU REMEMBER ME? WE'RE IN THE SAME CLASS.
I'M MOMO KASHIWABARA.
NICE TO MEET YOU. ♥
OH!
ARE YOU ... CURIOUS ABOUT THESE?
AREN'T THEY CUTE? I MADE THEM ALL MYSELF! ♥
YEAH... I'M CURIOUS IN A LOT OF WAYS ...
SETTING ASIDE WHETHER THEY'RE CUTE OR NOT.


THE TRUTH IS, I'VE BEEN WANTING TO TALK TO YOU ...
...EVER SINCE YOU TRANSFERRED IN.
I KNOW!
TO CELEBRATE OUR FRIENDSHIP...
...I'LL GIVE YOU THE BEST ONE I'VE MADE.
BUN-CHAN!
RUI!

LET'S EAT LUNCH TOGETHER!
OH.
OKAY.
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?
AH!
DID YOU GET THAT FROM MOMO KASHIWABARA?!
EWW!
DON'T TOUCH IT!
BA
DUNK
THAT WAS CLOSE. YOU ALMOST GOT INFECTED BY THE NYMPHO BUG.
YOU SHOULD STAY AWAY FROM HER, RUI!
NYMPHO...?

THAT'S RIGHT!
SHE JUMPS FROM GUY TO GUY!
YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW MUCH SHE'S HATED BY THE OTHER GIRLS.
SHE'S BEEN FAMOUS AROUND SCHOOL SINCE FIRST YEAR.
AT ANY RATE, THE WAY SHE LURES GUYS IS INSANE!
LIKE HER FLIRTY VOICE WHEN SHE TALKS TO THEM!
OR HOW SHE SHOWS HER CLEAVAGE ON PURPOSE DURING SUMMER!
OR HOW SHE'LL BEND OVER AND FLASH HER PANTIES IN FRONT OF GUYS!
THERE'S EVEN A RUMOR SHE TRIED A SIXSOME ONCE!
SHE'S A TOTAL SLUT.
UGH! GROSS!
...
HMM ...
ガタ CLUNK

RUI ...?
EVEN IF ALL THAT'S TRUE ...
...WHETHER OR NOT I SHOULD STAY AWAY FROM HER...
...IS MY DECISION TO MAKE.
TACHIBANA-SAAAN!

UMM...
MOMO KASHIWABARA!
CALL ME MOMO.
REMEMBER THE BUNNY I GAVE YOU THIS MORNING?
WELL...
I TRIED MAKING THIS DURING BREAK, TOO.
TACHIBANA-SAN!
IT'S FOR YOU. ♥
OH.
THANKS...
ARE YOU GOING HOME ALONE?
YEAH.
LET'S GO TOGETHER, THEN!

T
コロミス
れ
LICK
ろ
っ
MMM! SOOO GOOD!
I LOVE SALTED VANILLA THE MOST!
HEY,
IS IT OKAY IF I CALL YOU BY YOUR FIRST NAME, TOO?
SURE...
YAY! RUI-RUI IT IS, THEN! ♥
WHY REPEAT IT?
L'AMANT'S OWNER DID, TOO...
...
SAY, MOMO.
UMM...
HAVE YOU... BEEN IN A LOT OF RELATIONSHIPS?

...
DID SOMEONE TELL YOU ABOUT ME?
MMM...
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT A LOT.
BUT IF I HAD TO COUNT...
...I GUESS I'VE BEEN WITH...
...30 OR SO GUYS?
OH, BUT NEVER MORE THAN ONE AT A TIME.
I ALWAYS BREAK UP BEFORE DATING SOMEONE ELSE.
WELL, NOT THAT IT REALLY MATTERS...
I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S AMAZING OR APPALLING...
WHAT ABOUT THE SIX-SOME?
?
SIX-SOME?
LIKE IN GOLF?
I GUESS THAT'S JUST A RUMOR...
MY RELATIONSHIPS JUST NEVER SEEM TO WORK OUT, Y'KNOW?

WE'LL ALWAYS START OUT LOVEY-DOVEY,
BUT AFTER A WHILE THEY START TO GET KINDA VIOLENT,
HOW STUPID CAN YOU BE?
OR THEY'LL EVENTUALLY CHEAT ON ME,
DON'T WORRY.
SHE'S #3.
MY MONEY!
IT'S ALL GONE!
OR STEAL MONEY FROM MY PURSE.
I CAN'T GO TO SCHOOL LIKE THIS.
ONE EVEN TRIED TO KEEP ME LOCKED UP.
IN OTHER WORDS, YOU'RE A JERK MAGNET.
HUH?
NEVER MIND.
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I'M SO UNSTABLE...
...BUT I DON'T REALLY HAVE MANY FRIENDS.
IF IT'S OKAY WITH YOU...
...I'D LIKE IT IF WE COULD HANG OUT MORE. ♥
...
SURE.

RUI-RUI!
LET'S GO TO MUSIC CLASS TOGETHER!
MY NEWEST CREATION!
HEY, RUI-RUI. THERE'S A SUPER GOOD CREPE SHOP HERE.
BATHROOM, RUI-RUI? ME, TOO.
WANNA GO HOME TOGETHER, RUI-RUI?

AH.
IT'S NOT EVERYDAY YOU GO HOME WITH FRIENDS.
HI! I'M MOMO KASHIWABARA.
HEY. NATSUO FUJII.
ARE YOU RUI-RUI'S FRIEND?
UHH...
WELL, SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT.
ARE YOU GOING HOME?
YEAH, I'M GONNA STOP BY THE BOOKSTORE, THOUGH.
OH!
WE'RE GOING, TOO. WANNA COME WITH US?

BOOKS
本
BOOKSTORE YUU
ブックストア悠
BUNGEIKATO
WEEKLY PUBLICA
WOW … THAT LOOKS REALLY HARD TO READ.
OH, IT'S NOT TOO BAD.
IT HAS EASY-TO-READ SHORT STORIES, TOO.
I CAN LEND YOU A COLLECTION IF YOU'RE INTERESTED.
HUH?
SURE …
I MIGHT WANNA CHECK IT OUT…

AH HA HA
あははっ
JING JING
チリン チリーン
LOOK OUT!
PULL
JEEZ. THIS IS A SIDEWALK, Y'KNOW...
YOU'RE SO KIND, NATSUO-KUN.
HUH? ISN'T THIS JUST COMMON COURTESY?

WE'RE GONNA STOP SOMEWHERE ELSE FIRST.
OKAY.
LATER.
NOW ... WHICH WAY WAS THE CREPE SHOP?
...
HEY, RUI-RUI.
DOES NATSUO-KUN HAVE A GIRLFRIEND?
IS IT OKAY ...
...IF I FALL FOR HIM?

CHAPTER 12: LOVE RIVALS?!

...
WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME?
HUH? WELL, HE'S YOUR FRIEND, AFTER ALL.
I JUST ...
...DIDN'T WANT TO STEP ON YOUR TOES IN CASE YOU LIKED HIM.

...
IT MAKES... NO DIFFERENCE TO ME.
REALLY?!
THANK GOD!
THEN I'M GONNA TRY TO GO OUT WITH NATSUO-KUN!
WISH ME LUCK, OKAY? ♥
WHOA!
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS HEAD? IS SOMEONE TRYING TO CURSE YOU?
TOO SPOOKY.
NO, I DON'T THINK IT'S VOODOO.
I DUNNO. NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT...
...

HEY.
DO YOU...
HM?
...
...
NEVER MIND.
HUH?
OKAY THEN...
キ SQUEAK
ュ
ッ
...
ポタ DRIP
ポタ DRIP

OH, CRAP! I'M GONNA GET CALLED ON FOR CLASSIC LIT TODAY BUT I FORGOT MY NOTES!
LET ME COPY YOURS!
WAY TO GO, DUMMY!
HUH?
DOESN'T RUI'S FACE LOOK PRETTY RED?
SHE'S RIGHT.
ARE YOU SICK?
YOU MIGHT HAVE A FEVER?
YOU SHOULD GO TO THE NURSE'S OFFICE.
TAP TAP TAP
たたたっ

DING キーン
DONG コーン
DANG カーン…
HUH?
YOU GOIN' HOME, RUI-CHAN?
I HAVE A LITTLE FEVER...
FOR REAL? YOU OKAY?
CAN YOU MAKE IT HOME BY YOURSELF?
YEAH...
WHY ARE YOU TALKIN' LIKE HER BOYFRIEND?

WHA ?
HOW SO ...?
SNEAK
IS SHE GONNA BE OKAY?
YANK
!
KA-
KASHI-WABARA-SAN?!
MOMO ...

IT WAS KINDA HARD TO TALK TO YOU WHILE YOU WITH YOUR FRIENDS...
OH, IS THIS ABOUT THE NOVELLA? I'LL BRING IT TOMORROW IF–
THAT, TOO, BUT...
カサ RUSTLE
...?
IT'S MY LINE* ID.
IF YOU'RE EVER SUPER BORED OR WHATEVER...
...I WAS HOPING YOU COULD MESSAGE ME.
...
ぱっ SNAP
YOUR HAND'S PRETTY SWEATY...

*LINE is a call and messenger program akin to Skype.

G-GIVE ME YOUR ANSWER...
...OVER LINE, OKAY?!
DASH
...
I CAN SEE YOUR STRING PANTIES CLEAR AS DAY...
ANSWER?
Would you like to go on a date after school today?
SPSHHH

HEY. YOU AWAKE?
...
DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING? I FOUND YOU COLLAPSED AT THE FRONT DOOR.
SCARED THE HELL OUT OF ME.
...DIDN'T MOMO...
...ASK YOU OUT?
HUH?
SHE SAID SHE WAS GOING TO YESTERDAY...
YEAH...
SHE GAVE ME HER ID AND TOLD ME TO ANSWER HER OVER LINE...
...BUT I DON'T EVEN USE LINE.
PLUS, I CAN'T JUST LEAVE YOU LIKE THIS AND GO HANG OUT.
...
ANYWAY, DRINK SOME WATER.
IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN GET YOU?

WARM WATER...
AND PAJAMAS...
I'M ALL SWEATY.
I WANT TO WIPE DOWN AND CHANGE.
...A TOWEL...
HEY... ARE YOU OKAY?
IF YOU WANT SOMETHING TO EAT, I'LL BRING...
STRIP
ぬ
!
ギッ
WHA—
HEY!
C'MON, MAN!
WHY ARE YOU GETTING ALL FLUSTERED?

AT LEAST WAIT UNTIL I LEAVE THE ROOM!
OH,
WIPE MY BACK BEFORE YOU LEAVE, PLEASE.
...
STEP-SISTER!
SICK PERSON!

YOU SHOULD TRY TO GET SOME SLEEP.
SENSEI OUGHT TO BE HOME SOON ANY—
ピロロンッ
BRING DING

SORRY FOR THE LATE RESPONSE! I JUST SAW YOUR TEXT. 😖

HOW'S RUI DOING? I'LL BE HOME LATE FROM WORK TONIGHT, SO CAN I ASK YOU TO TAKE CARE OF HER, NATSUO-KUN?

SORRY! 💧

...
SERIOUSLY?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO STAY WITH ME ALL THE TIME.
WELL, SHE DID ASK ME TO TAKE CARE OF YOU...

...
HEY...
YOU TRIED TO ASK ME SOMETHING YESTERDAY, RIGHT?
WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?
DO YOU...
...HAVE ANYONE YOU LIKE?
...!
HUH? WHERE DID THAT COME FROM...?
Abercrombie
...I GUESS...
MOMO HAS A CRUSH ON YOU...
Abercrombie 15
IS IT REALLY COOL FOR YOU TO TELL ME THAT?
SHE DIDN'T TELL ME TO KEEP IT A SECRET.

SHE TOLD ME TO WISH HER LUCK...
...BUT WHEN I THINK ABOUT THE TWO OF YOU DATING...
FOR SOME REASON...
IT KINDA BOTHERS ME...
THAT SOUNDS LIKE...
SO...
...I WAS WONDERING HOW YOU FELT...
SORRY, BOWL PLEASE...
ゲ
!
ボ
ッ
BLERGH
YOU OKAY?!
ゲホッ COUGH
ゲホッ COUGH
KEEP PUKING UNTIL YOU FEEL BETTER.
YOUR FEVER...!
15

39.8 °C
IT'S ALMOST 40*!
トゥルルル TRRRR
トゥルルル TRRRR
TSUKIKO-SAN, HOW LONG WILL YOU BE AT WORK?
...I SEE...
THERE'S FEVER MEDICINE IN THE FRIDGE?
OKAY.
GOT IT.
ベルガリア
LET'S SEE. FEVER MEDICINE...
WHY THE FRIDGE, ANYWAY?
OH, IS THIS IT?
A...
RIGERATE
A SUPPOSITORY?!
LOWER FEVER
ハァ HUFF
ハァ HUFF
ハァ HUFF
ERR...
THINK YOU CAN PUT IT IN YOURSELF?
...
I DON'T...
THINK SO...

*103.64 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT.

C'MON, BE A TROOPER!
YOUR FEVER WILL GO DOWN QUICKLY IF YOU USE THIS.
Abercrombie
YOU DO IT, THEN.
HUH...?
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU--
IT'S...
...HARD... TO GET UP...
...BUT I CAN...TURN AROUND...
WHA?!

ゴク…ッ
GULP
F-
FOR REAL ...?!

CHAPTER 13: MAKING UP

FWIP
IT'S ONLY EIGHT...
EVERYONE PROBABLY WON'T BE BACK FOR ANOTHER THREE TO FOUR HOURS.
08:00 PM
ゴクリ...
GULP
I GUESS...
...I HAVE NO CHOICE!

... YEAH.
グッ PULL
ッ
I'M ...
PULLING THEM DOWN, OKAY?
ス ス SLIDE
ス

PEEK
ちらっ
NOW FROM HERE ON...
...IS THE REAL PREDICAMENT.
in!
MENTAL SIMULATION
RUSTLE
ごそ
RUSTLE
ごそ

MOOSH
ムニュ
IT'S...
...SO SOFT...
OOPS.
THIS IS NO TIME TO BE MOVED.
さわ RUB
さわ RUB
RUB さわ
RUB さわ
IS...
...THIS IT?
WRONG... HOLE...

HUH?!
S- SORRY!
...
AH.
HERE, HUH?
ALL RIGHT.
TRY TO RELAX, OKAY?
ピクッ
TWITCH

IT...
IT WENT IN...
Abercrombie
15
HER FEVER SEEMS TO HAVE BROKEN.
CLACK
カチャ
THANK GOOD-NESS...

THANK YOU FOR TAKING SUCH GOOD CARE OF RUI, NATSUO-KUN.
OH...
IT WAS NOTHING...
OOH...
?
WHY ARE YOU CRYING?
WELL...
YOU'RE ALL GROWN MEN AND WOMEN.
TO BE HONEST, I WAS WORRIED IF YOU'D ALL BE ABLE TO ACCEPT...
LIVING TOGETHER ALL OF A SUDDEN.
BUT YOU'RE GETTING ALONG GREAT AS STEP-SIBLINGS.
I'M JUST GLAD MY WORRIES WERE UNFOUNDED.
AS A FAMILY OF FIVE,
LET'S BE THERE FOR EACH OTHER FROM NOW ON, TOO!

YEAH ...
FAMI-LY ...
... HUH ?
TAP
TAP
TAP
ACK ...
SORRY ABOUT YESTER-DAY!
I DON'T ACTUALLY USE LINE...

OHHH, IS THAT ALL?
THANK GOD! I THOUGHT YOU HATED ME OR SOMETHING.
THEN...
...INSTEAD OF THE DATE...
WOULD YOU...
...EAT LUNCH WITH ME TODAY? ♥
HUH? UHH...
S-SURE.
YAAAY! ♥
HEY, NATSUO.
DOES KASHIWABARA HAVE HER SIGHTS SET ON YOU?

WHAT?! SERIOUSLY?!
YOU KNOW HER?
HOW CAN'T WE...?
SHE'S FAMOUS.
WHY?
FOR BEING A SLUT.
HUH...?
I MEAN,
DO WHAT YOU WANT...
...BUT THE IDEA OF BECOMING HOLE BROTHERS WITH A FRIEND IS KINDA AWKWARD.
WHA?!
WE SCREWED ONCE.
F-
FOR REAL?!
YOU DATED?!
NO, WE DIDN'T DATE.
I MEAN, HAVE YOU SEEN THE DOLLS ON HER BAG?
THAT'S DEFINITELY THE KINDA GIRL YOU DON'T WANNA GET IN TOO DEEP WITH.
GOOD POINT...

WELL, HER BODY WAS BANGIN', THOUGH.
BIG TITS, TOO.
I'M GONNA NEED MORE DETAIL...
...
TA-DA!
I WAS HOPING WE'D EAT TOGETHER...
...SO I MADE A LOT!
BUT I HAVE MY OWN LUNCH.
THAT'S NOT ENOUGH FOR A BOY, RIGHT?
TAKE SOME OF MINE!
ひょい FWIP
EAT UP! ♥
ひょい FWIP

DO YOU ...
DO THIS SORT OF THING TO EVERYONE?
OF COURSE NOT.
JUST PEOPLE I LIKE. ♥
...
YOU DON'T HIDE MUCH, HUH?
WELL, YEAH.
I MEAN ...
...
IF YOU DO YOUR BEST AND IT STILL DOESN'T WORK OUT, THEN IT CAN'T BE HELPED.
...IF YOU DON'T ALWAYS GIVE YOUR ALL...
...YOU'LL JUST END UP REGRETTING THINGS, RIGHT?

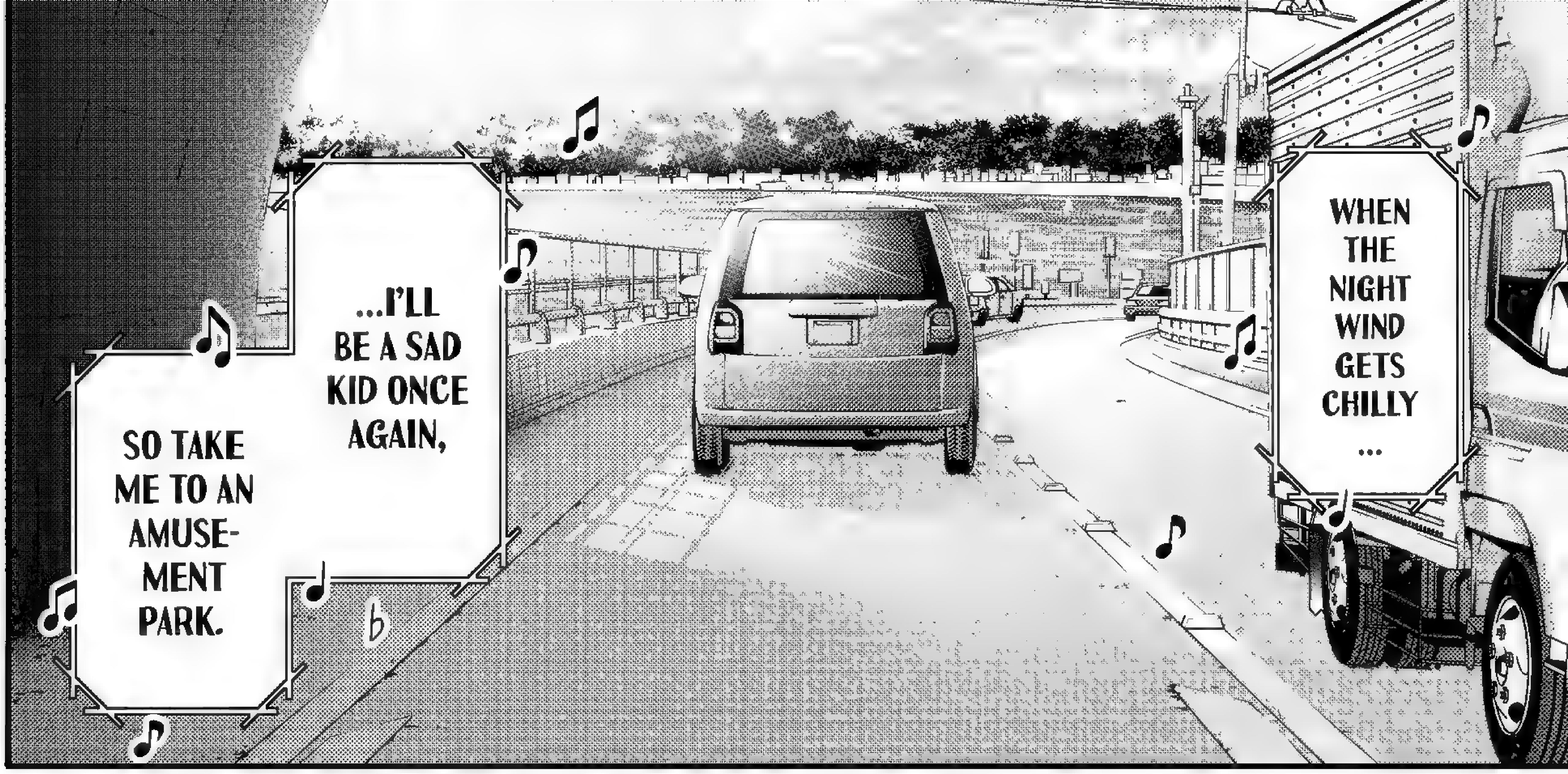
IT'S MUCH MORE PAINFUL TO NOT MAKE A MOVE...
AND JUST KEEP THINKING "WHAT IF?"
WHAT WON'T HAPPEN, WON'T.
UNLESS YOU TAKE THE CHANCE TO CONVEY YOUR FEELINGS ...
YOU WON'T GET THE CHANCE TO GIVE UP, EITHER.
...
YOU SURE ARE SOMETHING ELSE.
DID YOU FALL FOR ME?
WANNA GO OUT?
NO, I WOULDN'T GO THAT FAR...
WE STILL JUST MET, TOO.
I DON'T MIND STARTING AS SEX FRIENDS. ♥
...

IT'S ABOUT TIME...
...I FINISH THIS NOVEL, TOO.
CLACK
カチャ…
WELCOME BACK.

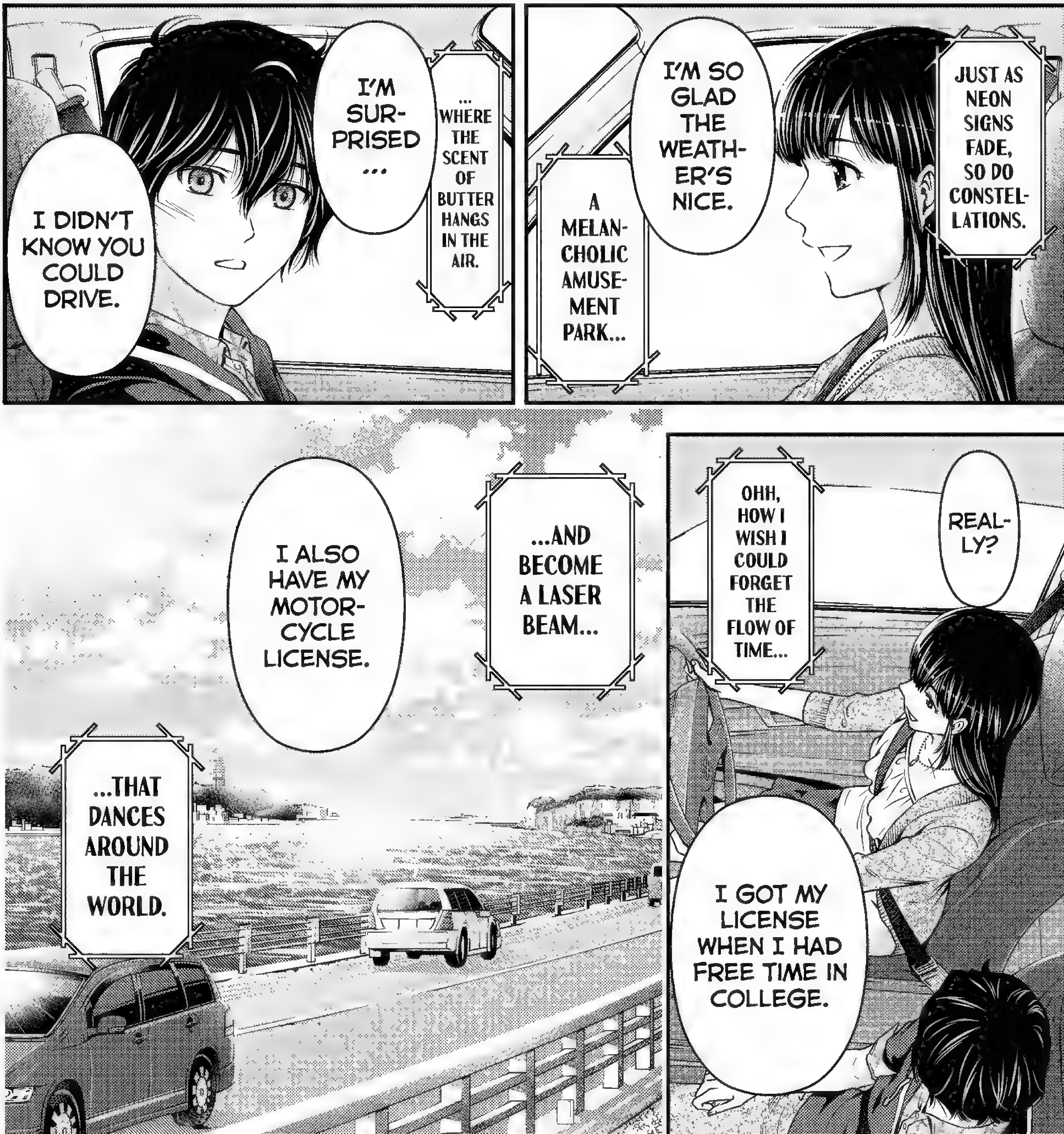
YOU'RE HOME EARLY TODAY.
YEAH. I WAS WORRIED ABOUT RUI.
I ASKED THE CLUB ADVISOR TAKEDA-SENSEI TO LOOK AFTER PRACTICE.
I'M JUST THE ASSISTANT ADVISOR, ANYWAY.
HOW IS SHE?
MUCH BETTER, IT LOOKS LIKE.
SHE SAID SHE'LL GO TO SCHOOL TOMORROW.
ピッ BEEP
ABOUT SHUU-SAN...
THANK YOU FOR KEEPING HIM A SECRET FROM OUR PARENTS.
I REALLY APPRECIATE IT.

NO PROBLEM... IT'S NOT REALLY MY PLACE TO TELL THEM, ANYWAY.
I KNOW...
...I CAUSED YOU A LOT OF TROUBLE, TOO.
...
WE STILL...
HAVEN'T PROPERLY MADE UP YET, RIGHT?
WHY DON'T...
...THE TWO OF US GO SOMEWHERE THIS SUNDAY?

CHAPTER 14:
WHAT WOULD YOU DO?


WHEN THE NIGHT WIND GETS CHILLY...
...I'LL BE A SAD KID ONCE AGAIN,
SO TAKE ME TO AN AMUSEMENT PARK.

NOTE: YUMI MATSUTOYA'S "YOKOSO KAGAYAKU JIKAN E" (WELCOME TO THE DAZZLING TIMES)


JUST AS NEON SIGNS FADE, SO DO CONSTELLATIONS.
I'M SO GLAD THE WEATHER'S NICE.
A MELANCHOLIC AMUSEMENT PARK...
...WHERE THE SCENT OF BUTTER HANGS IN THE AIR.
I'M SURPRISED...
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD DRIVE.
REALLY?
OHH, HOW I WISH I COULD FORGET THE FLOW OF TIME...
I GOT MY LICENSE WHEN I HAD FREE TIME IN COLLEGE.
...AND BECOME A LASER BEAM...
I ALSO HAVE MY MOTORCYCLE LICENSE.
...THAT DANCES AROUND THE WORLD.

HUH...
THIS PLACE IS FAMOUS?
YEAH!
ALL THE GUIDE BOOKS RECOMMENDED IT!
ALRIGHTY!
LET'S DIG IN.
YUM!
AH HA HA! WE SYNCED UP!
DON'T COPY ME!
THAT'S MY LINE.
OH, MY.
WHAT A LOVELY COUPLE.
OH!
WE'RE NOT A COUPLE!
WE'RE JUST STEP-SIBLINGS.
OH, IS THAT SO?
YOU MUST BE CLOSE.
HEY, YOU.
DON'T GET EMBARRASSED.
ゴ
スッ CHOP
THORRY...
NOW, THEN.
WHY DON'T WE SEE THE SIGHTS?

FORTUNE
OUTSTANDING LUCK
ENOSHIMA ESCALATOR
ESCA-LATOR

ザァァァ…ン
WHOOOOH
ザァァ…ン
WHOOOOH
AHHH…
THE SEA BREEZE FEELS GREAT!
I FEEL LIKE TAKING OFF MY SHOES AND RUNNING WILD!
YOU WON'T?
FU FU, I'M NOT THAT CHILDISH.
MY FEET WILL GET ALL SANDY.
THEN MAYBE I'LL GO NUTS.
I'M STILL A CHILD, AFTER ALL.

...
DOES IT STILL BOTHER YOU THAT...
I CALLED YOU A CHILD?
TO BE HONEST...
...I DIDN'T REALLY THINK THAT.
BACK THEN, I JUST CHOSE THE WORDS THAT I KNEW...
...WOULD HURT YOU THE MOST.
...
OH!
I FOUND A NICE PIECE OF DRIFTWOOD!

WHOOOOH
ザァ…ン…
SITTING LIKE THIS...
...IT FEELS LIKE TIME MOVES SO SLOWLY, HUH?
...
MIND IF I ASK YOU SOMETHING...
...THAT'S BEEN ON MY MIND ALL THIS TIME?
HM...?
WHY DID YOU HAVE AN AFFAIR...
...AFTER WHAT HAPPENED WITH YOUR FATHER?

THINKING ABOUT TSUKIKO-SAN'S FEELINGS, I CAN'T IMAGINE...
THE FIRST TIME I MET SHUU-SAN...
...I WAS ABOUT YOUR AGE, NATSUO-KUN.
HE WAS MY FIRST LOVE,
AND...
...MY TEACHER.
WHAT?
REALLY?!
THAT'S GREAT!
WHAT'S UP?
MAMI RAN INTO SHIBATA AFTER SCHOOL,
AND THEY WALKED HOME TOGETHER!

REALLY?!
GOOD FOR YOU, MAMI-CHAN!
DID YOU TALK MUCH?
A-
A BIT, I GUESS.
YOU SHOULD'VE INVITED HIM TO A MOVIE OR SOMETHING!
TACHIBANA!
LET ME COPY YOUR ENGLISH NOTES, WILL YA?
NO WAY! YOU SHOULD HAVE TAKEN YOUR OWN!
PLEASE DON'T SAY THAT, O' ALMIGHTY GODDESS, HINA-SAMA!
OH, FINE...
THANKS♪
HEY, DON'T YOU THINK...
...HINA'S FLIRTING TOO MUCH?

I THOUGHT THE SAME THING!
SHE ALWAYS ACTS DIFFERENTLY WHEN SHE TALKS TO BOYS.
SHE KNOWS MAMI LIKES SHIBATA, TOO.
UGH, NASTY…
WHY DON'T WE SERIOUSLY SHUN HER FROM NOW ON?
POP ひよ
ARE YOU EATING ALONE?
こっ

Y-YES, I AM...
THEN DO YOU MIND...
POP
ぴょ
...IF I JOIN YOU?
YOU'RE GOOD AT VENTRILOQUISM.
YOU FLATTER ME.
NO! I REALLY DO SPEAK!
ARE YOU A SECOND YEAR?
THIS IS HAGIWARA. HE TEACHES THIRD-YEAR BIOLOGY.
NICE TO MEET YOU.
YOUR LUNCH LOOKS REALLY GOOD!
IT EVEN HAS MY FAVORITE, QUAIL EGGS!
NOW, NOW...
SENSEI.
IS IT OKAY IF I COME AGAIN TOMORROW?

OF COURSE.
THE ROOM IS ALWAYS OPEN DURING BREAKS!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE.
DEPARTING TEACHERS FAREWELL CEREMONY

THEN ONE DAY,
I RAN INTO HIM AGAIN IN MY FOURTH YEAR OF COLLEGE.
I WAS SHOCKED TO SEE A RING ON HIS FINGER,
BUT I SUCCUMBED TO JOY WHEN HE SAID WE SHOULD MEET AGAIN.
INCLUDING MY FATHER,
I ALWAYS THOUGHT PEOPLE WHO WERE STUPID ENOUGH TO CHEAT OR HAVE AFFAIRS...
...WERE THE WORST KIND OF SCUM.
I REALLY DID...
...BELIEVE THAT.

DO I REALLY HAVE ANY RIGHT TO BLAME SENSEI?
I CONFRONTED AND CRITICIZED HER.
AND I STILL THINK THAT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

BUT WHAT WOULD I HAVE DONE...IN HER SHOES?
FLAP
SENSEI.
...?
IT'S MY NOVEL.
I FINISHED IT.
HERE...
THE HEROINE...
...IS MODELED AFTER YOU.

I ALWAYS...
...LOVED YOU, SENSEI.
YOU MEAN...
...AS A WOMAN, RIGHT?
A Faraway Hand
遠い手
雨は朝方から霧雨に変わ
そうに支度を始めると
丈夫？」
と精一杯の
うに
...I SEE.

IN THAT CASE,
WITHOUT LETTING MOM,
OR FUJII-SAN,
OR RUI KNOW ...
...WHY DON'T THE TWO OF US START DATING...
...IN SECRET?
WHAT ...?

CHAPTER 14: RESOLVE

SKSH
ザッ
...
SKSH
ザッ
SKSH
ザッ
SKSH
ザッ

SPLASH
SPLASH
バシャ
SPLASH
バシャ
SPLASH
バシャ
HEY ...
HANG ON A SECOND!
WHAT'S COME OVER YOU?!
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO?

THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS...
...FOR THE TWO OF US TO BE TOGETHER.

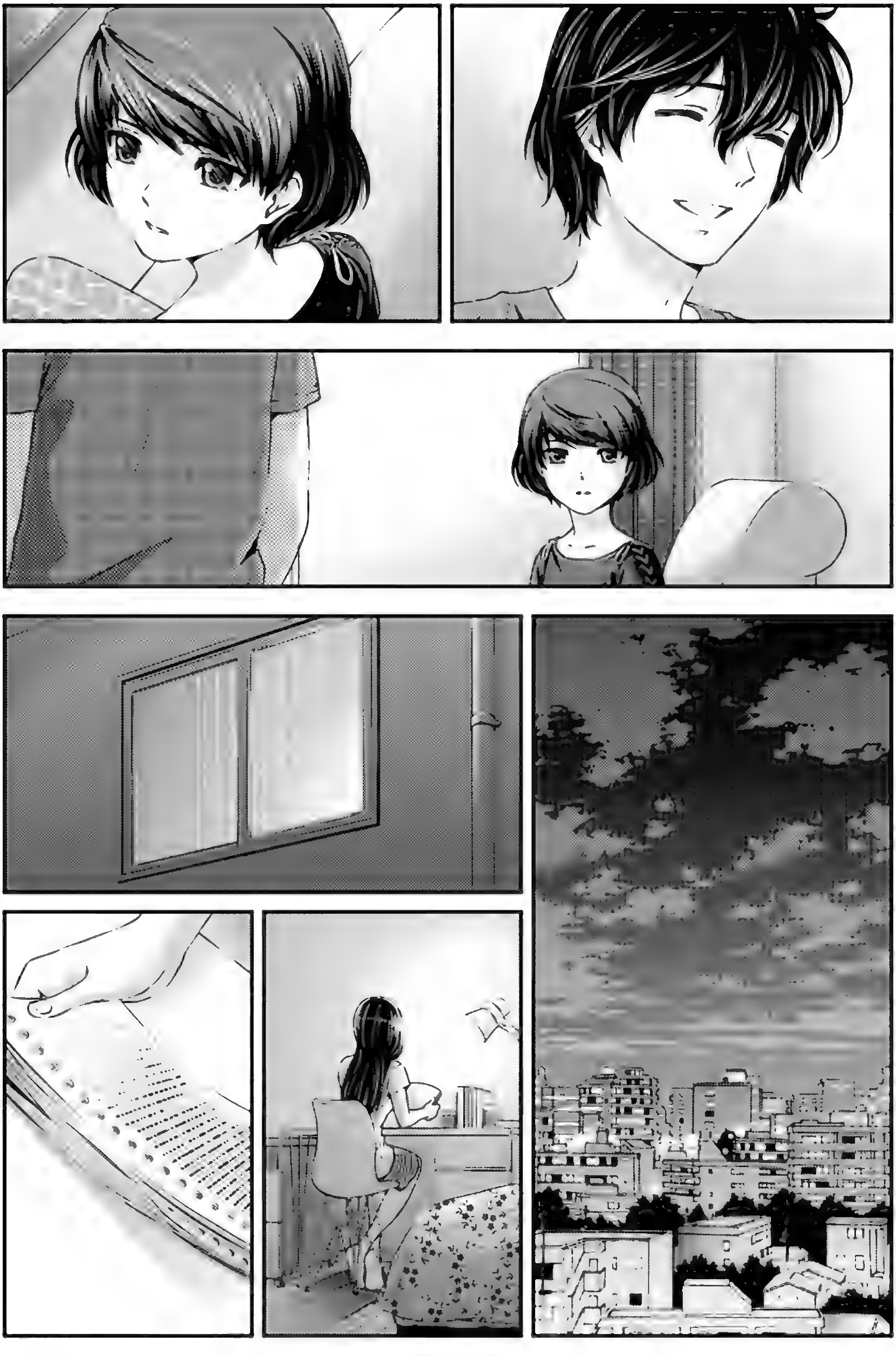
WE'LL DIE TOGETHER.
EVEN IF WE BECAME LOVERS,
WE'D NEVER BE ABLE TO HIDE IT FOREVER.
IF WE WERE FOUND OUT, IT WOULD MEAN THROWING AWAY EVERYTHING FROM OUR FAMILY TO OUR VERY PLACE IN SOCIETY.
THAT'S THE SAME AS A DOUBLE SUICIDE.

DO YOU HAVE THE RESOLVE ...
...TO DO THAT?
...

THAT'S FINE.
WHEN WE GET BACK TO SHORE...
...LET'S RETURN TO BEING NORMAL, CLOSE STEP-SIBLINGS, OKAY?
BEFORE THAT...
...CAN I ASK YOU...
...TO GRANT ME ONE LAST WISH?
WHOOOOH
...

...SENSEI.
SENSEI.
SENSEI.
SENSEI...

カチャ
CLACK
THE SAME IS LAME
WE'RE BACK!
WEL-COME HOME.
OH!
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR CLOTHES?
YOU DIDN'T LEAVE LIKE THAT, DID YOU?
THEY GOT SOAKED WHEN WE PLAYED AT THE BEACH.
WE BOUGHT THESE ON THE WAY BACK.
AND I'M SURE IT WAS HINA WHO GOT EXCITED AND DRAGGED YOU IN.
SORRY, NATSUO-KUN.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. SHE ENDED UP PAYING FOR THE CLOTHES, ANYHOW...
SHE BETTER HAVE!
BUT I HAD A GOOD TIME.



ハ
Thank You
は玄関を振り返る。
の時ラジオを聞いてわれて
それは夢として
昼さがりの

is (of
ple
niture
son

KNOCK
コン
KNOCK
コン
HEY ...
DINNER'S READY.
... SORRY.
I DON'T NEED ANY TONIGHT.
...
OKAY ...
You

TA-DA! ♥
I BROUGHT DESSERT TODAY!
THEY'RE BEAR-TAN CUCAKES! ♥
...
I DUNNO IF I CAN FINISH ALL THESE ...
I WON'T MIND IF YOU LEAVE SOME. ♥
THANKS...
I'LL HAVE SOME AFTER LUNCH.

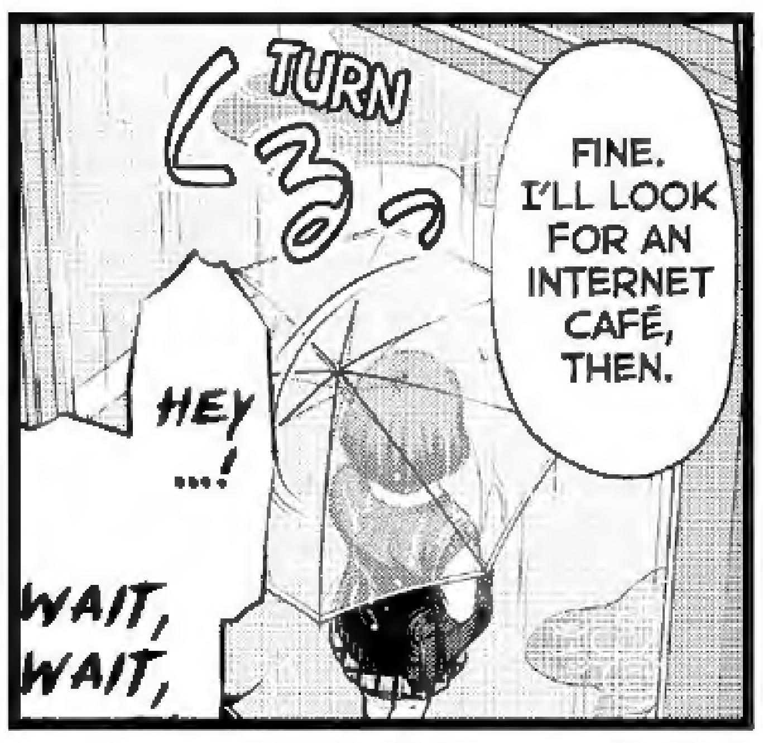
Y'KNOW,
YOU'VE SEEMED KINDA DOWN FOR THE LAST FEW DAYS.
HUH?
HE HE. YOU'RE BAD AT HIDING IT.
I'M ALL EARS IF YOU WANNA TALK ABOUT IT.
NAH, THAT'S ALL RIGHT...
I INSIST!
...
I'VE JUST BEEN KINDA FED UP...
WITH MYSELF.
I WANTED SOMETHING SO BADLY FOR SO LONG, AND WHEN IT WAS FINALLY OFFERED TO ME ON A PLATTER...
...I GOT SCARED AND TURNED IT DOWN.
I FIGURED IT WAS OUT OF MY REACH, ANYWAY.

BUT...I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE THROWN EVERYTHING AWAY IN ORDER TO TAKE IT.
I'D THOUGHT I WAS WILLING TO DO THAT.
YET BACK THEN, WHY DID I...

WHEN I SAW HOW SAD YOU LOOKED...
...I JUST FELT LIKE KISSING YOU.
SOR-RY.
DO YOU...
...WANNA COME TO MY PLACE TODAY?

…to be continued.

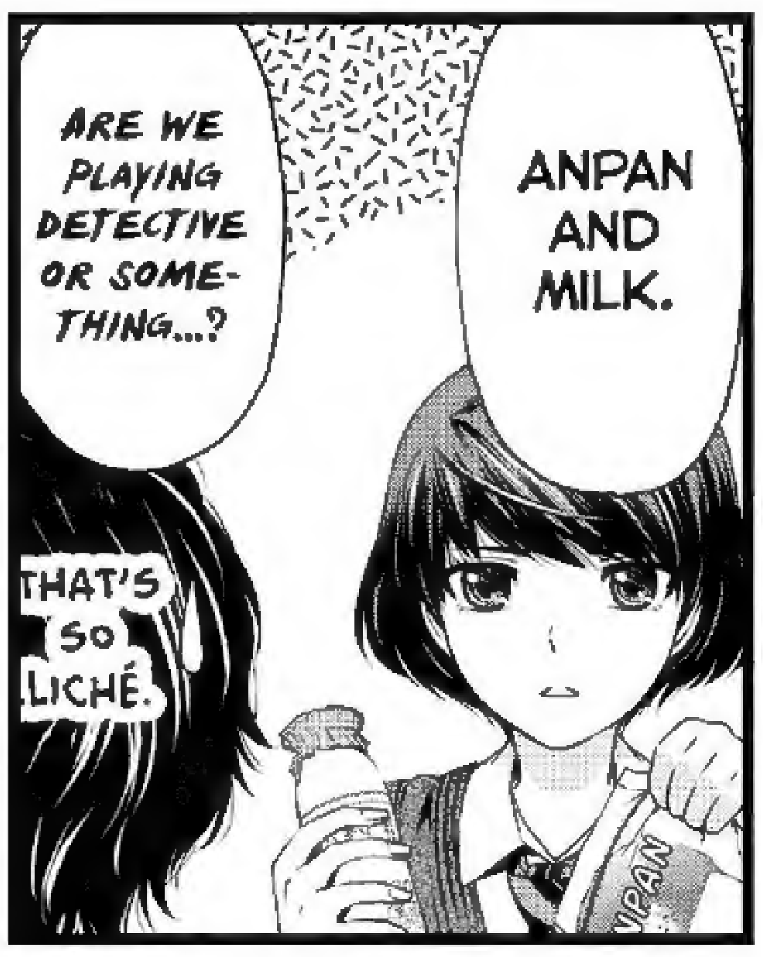
TRANSLATION NOTES


FINE. I'LL LOOK FOR AN INTERNET CAFÉ, THEN.
TURN
くるっ
HEY ...!
WAIT, WAIT,

INTERNET CAFÉS IN JAPAN, PAGE 22

> 22.4

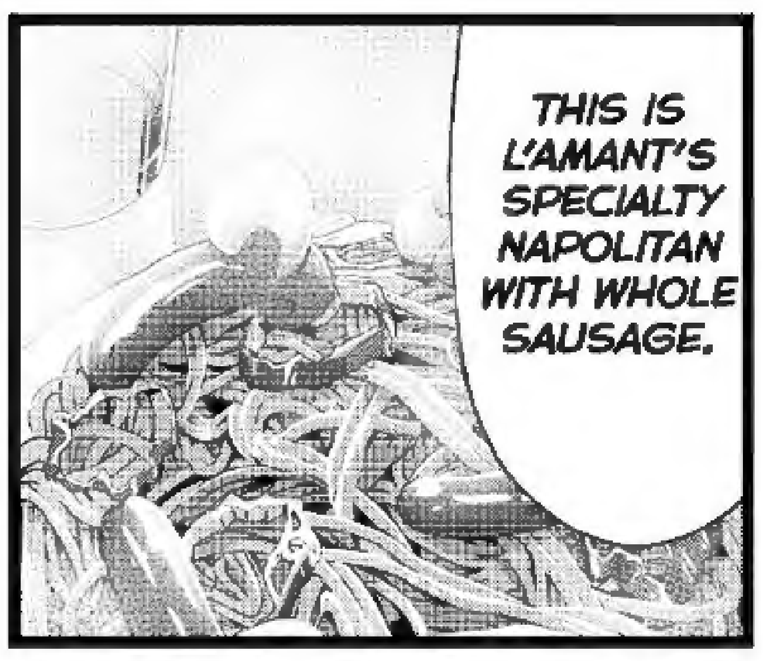
In Japan, one cheap option for killing time and getting some shuteye it by staying at an internet café. Patrons get their own cubicle where they can set up camp and surf the web or sleep at their leisure. These cafés also often have amenities such as libraries of manga and books, free soft drinks, and even showers to use for a minimal fee.


ANPAN AND MILK.
ARE WE PLAYING DETECTIVE OR SOME-THING...?
THAT'S SO LICHÉ.
JAPAN

ANPAN AND MILK, PAGE 41

> 41.4

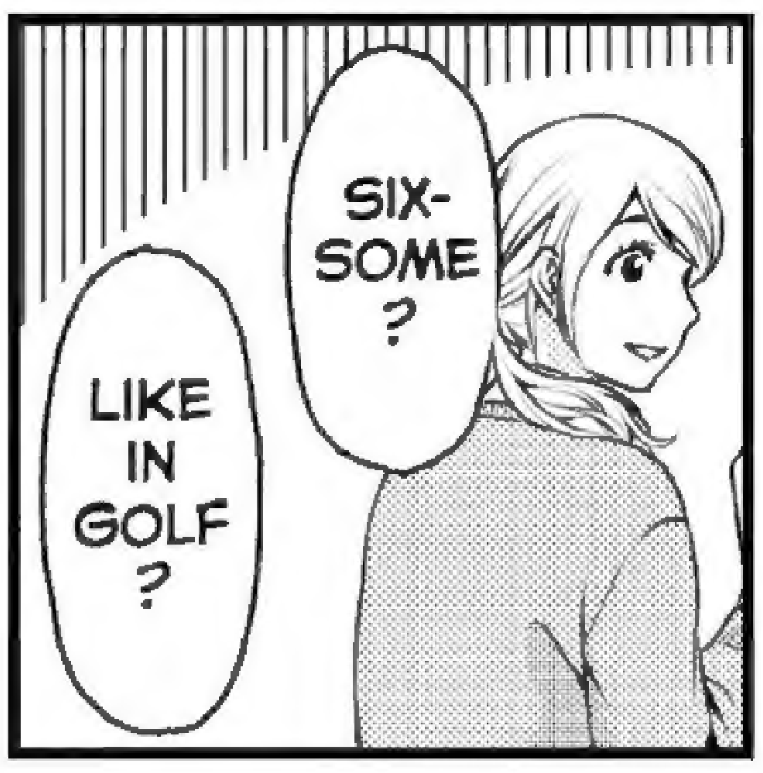
The combination of milk and *anpan*, a Japanese bread filled with sweet bean paste, is a staple cliché in Japanese detective dramas, who are most commonly seen eating the two during a steak-out. The cliché is so well-established that it often carries over to other dramas and anime/manga as a kind of self-aware joke. Another common cliché originating from detective dramas is the offering of *katsudon*, a pork cutlet bowl, to suspects during an interrogation.


THIS IS L'AMANT'S SPECIALTY NAPOLITAN WITH WHOLE SAUSAGE.

NAPOLIAN, PAGE 63

> 63.5

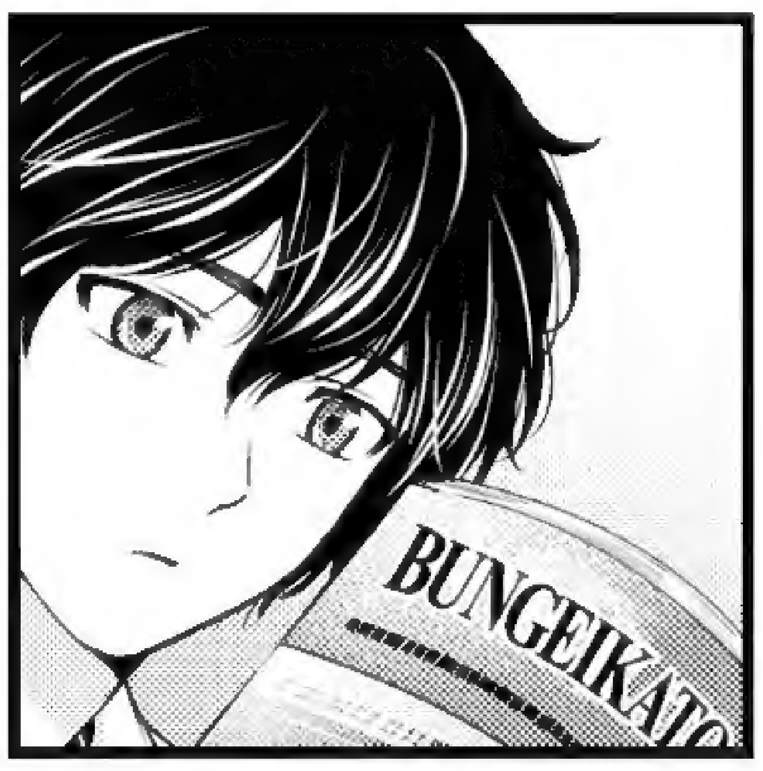
Not to be confused with Neapolitan-styled pasta, napolitan is a Japan-originated pasta dish consisting of spaghetti, tomato ketchup or a tomato-based sauce, onion, button mushrooms, green peppers, sausage, bacon and Tabasco sauce. The dish was named after Naples, Italy, or Napoli in Italian.


SIX-SOME ?
LIKE IN GOLF ?

SIXSOMES AND GOLF, PAGE 114

> 114.5

This was originally a joke that was unfortunately lost in translation. In Japanese, the common way to describe sex with more than two people is with a number + P, with 3P being a threesome, 4P being a foursome, and so on. Momo was rumored to have been in a sixsome, or 6P. 6P is also the name of a brand of cheese in Japan. When Rui asks Momo about her 6P, Momo confusedly thinks she's talking about said cheese. The translator attempted to rewrite this joke in English by invoking golf, where the term threesome and up is used to describe the number of people playing a round of golf together.



BUNGEIKATO, PAGE 118

> 118.2

The magazine Natsuo is reading is a reference to an existing magazine titled *Bungeishunju*, a monthly publishing that covers a wide range of topics from politics to sports and features articles written by politicians, researchers, journalists, and non-fiction writers alike. The *shunju* part of the magazine's title is written with the Chinese characters for Spring and Autumn, while the title of the magazine Natsuo is reading uses the characters for Summer and Winter.

Domestic Girlfriend 2

KODANSHA COMICS Digital Edition

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English digital edition published by Kodansha Advanced Media, LLC, San Francisco.

www.kodanshacomics.com

ISBN: 9781682336748

Digital Edition: 1.0.0

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YKS Services LLC/SKY Japan, INC.